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NOTES ON
MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS

WORKS BY LADY WILDE

ANCIENT LEGENDS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF
IRELAND

ANCIENT IRISH CURES AND CHARMS

DRIFTWOOD FROM SCANDINAVIA

ERITIS SICUT DEUS. Three volumes. From the
German

SIDONIA THE SORCERESS. From the German

THE GLACIER LAND. Dumas

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NOTES

ON

MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS

BY

LADY WILDE, Jane Francesca

AUTHOR OF

ANCIENT LEGENDS OF IRELAND 'DRIFTWOOD FROM SCANDINAVIA' &c.

Selected Essays

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MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS

JEAN PAUL RICHTER

THE eighteenth century is marked in German history by the rise of that wonderful literature which sprang into life full grown, full armed, like a second Minerva, and has since reigned the undisputed leader of the thought of Europe.

Jean Paul Richter belonged to this brilliant era of splendid intellects, and was one of its most celebrated leaders, while Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Kant, Lessing, Wieland, Tieck, Klopstock, Novalis, Schelling, Jacobi—all these constellated stars of poetry and philosophy were his contemporaries. The great German ocean of thought was then at a springtide, and overflowing into all Europe ; and from then until now, from her forests and her mountains, Germany has never ceased sending forth spiritual giants to exterminate error and crush dogmatic bigotry.

Richter's life, like that of the German literati in general, was marked by little external variety : from Bayreuth to Berlin to live—from Berlin to Bayreuth to die. He never beheld the sea nor the Swiss mountains ; and bitterly lamented, in his latter years, that he must die without ever having beheld the glory of nature from the summit of the Righi. There is a dreary monotonous uniformity in all these German lives. Kant, it is said, never crossed the court of the college in which he resided for thirty years ; and Schiller never beheld that

Switzerland whose scenery he has depicted with such consummate truth in his 'William Tell.'

The greatest literary men amongst them, Goethe, and a few others excepted, have generally commenced life as school-master or private tutor, and ended as priest, professor, or state counsellor. This is the usual routine; but the *duality* in their lives is still more striking than the uniformity. The *outer* world, so prosaic, dull, struggling, matter-of-fact—the *inner* a central fire, ever heaving up some gigantic mass of thought, or pouring forth its rich lava stream over the rude mechanical strata of daily life, crystallising all it touches into gems.

Richter's parents belonged to the humbler classes. Their dwelling, in which he first saw the light, was a little thatched cottage. Their library, the first dawning to him of a brighter light than the material, consisted only of the family Bible and psalm-book. Here, cradled in poverty, material and spiritual destitution, sprang to life one of the most gifted souls of the century. 'Truly, let none despair. Genius is of the palm-tree nature, which springs up and spreads out broader to heaven the bleaker and more arid is the desert around: 'Welcome poverty,' continues Jean Paul, 'so it come not too late in life. Riches weigh more heavily on talent than poverty. Under gold mountains lie crushed many spiritual Titans. Fate darkens the cage of the singing bird until he learns the harmonies she would teach him.'

While Jean Paul was yet a child, his father was appointed pastor of Joditz, which village he designated as his spiritual birthplace; for here the intellectual fibres, thirsting for nourishment, penetrated and wound themselves around everything from which they could extract aliment. He had access to an extensive miscellaneous library, the property of a friend; and thus, at the age of fifteen, saturated his mind with whatever he could appreciate and assimilate, laying the foundation of that truly wonderful and varied extent of knowledge, that unlimited power of illustration from all sciences and all literatures which is such a distinguishing peculiarity of his writings. Having no means of purchasing books, he adopted the plan of

making extract-books, which soon became a rich library in themselves. Before his seventeenth year he had thus completed many volumes, each containing 300 quarto pages. This self-teaching was far more consonant to his nature than the common-place routine of a school education, which only irritated without satisfying his mind. His companions, who mocked the poor village lad, in his coarse, ungainly dress of home manufacture, could not distinguish the gifted soul that lay hid beneath this rude disguise ; and many a dark hour he passed during his school days, mourning the want of those two great blessings denied to his unsunned youth, teachers and love. About this time his father died, and, in addition to his own trials and struggles, the care and support of his mother devolved on him—this poor mother, of whom he has said so beautifully that he loved all mothers for her sake. At eighteen he entered the university of Leipsic, where he soon found what sort of life people must lead who have neither friends nor money. His family wished him to enter the ministry ; but his dislike to theology was invincible ; for ‘to study what is not congenial to our nature is to contend with meanness, disgust, and *ennui*. To lavish talent on a subject wherein we can never excel is to weaken ourselves for one in which we might have reached to distinction ; but you must earn your bread—this is the miserable reason given. I know of nothing by which bread cannot be earned. Whatever be the natural tendency of your intellect, follow it—sacrifice everything for it, and if even the paltry reward bestowed on insignificant talent be denied, yet the exquisite enjoyment will still be yours which springs from the pursuit of *truth* and the consciousness of its attainment.’ Thus writes Jean Paul.

At this time he read the French authors with avidity. Voltaire, Helvetius, and Rousseau were his favourites ; but, if delighted by their wit and eloquence, he never became their disciple. Deep, intense FAITH seemed one of the primal faculties of his nature, as it is of German nature in general—faith in eternal truths, in the existence of the divine nature within us, and in the glorious possibility of humanity. So

here, in this gay, beautiful city of Leipsic, wandered the poor, unknown Richter, vainly trying, by the hieroglyphics of external pomp, to learn something of that great world-life, dashing and sparkling around him. But the gay world little heeded the tall, fair, flowing-haired rustic, in his thread-bare garments—and at last he takes the desperate resolve to become an author, finding no way in which he can maintain himself and his mother, unless by some such daring foray into the rich, brilliant world that surrounded him.

But it is easier to write a book than to find a publisher. This remorseless race stand dragon-like at the portal of Fame's Temple, and few, indeed, of the young aspirants survive the combat which is necessary before they can enter. Richter's first work lay unnoticed month after month on the desk of the publisher, and finally died as it had lived, in manuscript. Jean Paul, who perpetually reproduces himself in his works, describes in his novel of 'Siebenkass' how the poor advocate went from bookseller to bookseller in Leipsic, drew his manuscript from his pocket and replaced it again like a dagger in its sheath. In six months he completed another work, again applied to *the dragons*, but was refused by all. Yet he took courage to send it to Berlin, and in his dreary, cold, friendless desolation was at last cheered by the announcement that it should appear at the next Leipsic fair. It did appear, but nobody minded it; and when he wrote a third volume of the same kind of satirical essays, he could find neither editor, publisher, nor reader. As a last resource he sent it, with a letter stating his necessities, to all the distinguished and learned men. His letters remained unanswered, he was repulsed from every door, and in despair he fled from Leipsic in disguise, as though he had been a criminal, and took refuge once again with his poor mother at Hoff, whose residence was now further reduced to one apartment, where cookery, washing, spinning, and all the labours of domestic life, were carried on. Amid these strange dissonances, Richter thought, and wrote, and uttered to the world the deep music of his poet nature. But, after all, physical destitution is not the greatest evil to which

man is subject : the true soul-annihilating position is that of physical enjoyment. What are all the evils of hard work, coarse food, rude garments, compared with the listless misery and weary vapidness of a life in which there is nothing to combat, nothing to sacrifice, nothing to endure ?

The poor know nothing of the purposeless existence, the faded, false life, or of that weary impatience produced from the plenitude of all worldly enjoyments. Life in its fullest meaning, physically, psychologically, and morally, is resistance. Inaction is death—the suicide of the soul. ‘What is poverty that a man should pine under it ?’ asks Jean Paul. ‘It is but like piercing the ears of a maiden, and you hang precious jewels in the wound.’ Richter was now twenty-two, and read and laboured in his not quite idyllic retreat for many years, with the most untiring assiduity, lighting up the caverns of his own mind with many lamps before he again attempted to illuminate those of others. Here his extract books increased infinitely ; not a thought, phenomenon, or illustration escaped him, whether observed in books or nature, or in his own creative mind. All were instantly preserved, and formed what he termed ‘the quarries of his great works.’ It was from this custom that he was enabled to exhibit in his works that extraordinary mass of information which makes one think that his reading was universal and his memory omnipresent.

His next essay in money-making was as a private tutor, which office he sustained with much heart-sickening for three years. At length, disgusted with the ‘exceeding unpoeticalness of boy-nature,’ as Arnold phrases it, he resigned the employment, and fled back again to the cooking and spinning mother at Hoff. His mind had now long lain fallow, enriching itself with influences from above and around—for, according to his own doctrine, ‘The young poet should long love, wonder, worship and weep before he ventures to incarnate his wild thoughts into harmonious forms.’ But the creative spirit sprang up strong again within him, and finding that no one would read his satirical essays, he abandoned the ‘vinegar manufactory’ and wrote an essay on death, an earnest serious

work. Wieland was then editor of 'The German Mercury,' a paper which influenced all the cultivated minds of Germany for twenty years, and procured for Weimar the title of the German Athens. All trivial gossip was excluded from its pages, while the higher literature of Europe, philosophy, art, political epochs, all subjects calculated to have an enduring influence upon men were elucidated and discussed with that calm, comprehending cosmopolitanism for which the Germans are unrivalled. Richter's essay obtained admission into this paper, and its publication brought him the friendship of the great *Herder*—the man who was 'not a poet but a poem,' whose 'soul was one thought, but that thought the universe.' So Jean Paul gained some celebrity, but no money; although at the time he and his mother had not wherewithal in the house to purchase wood for their fire. Again he attempted education, and opened a school. The four years passed in this employment were, he states, the happiest of his life, 'for it is pleasant in the Arabia Petraea of human life to meet one race at least whose lips and eyes have never worn a mask.' He also became guide, philosopher, and friend to all the tender, aspiring female hearts of the neighbourhood. No poet ever loved the sex with sublimer devotion. To him the female nature, with its instinctive perceptions of truth, beauty, and grace, and appreciation for all that is noble and self-sacrificing, its soft emotions and unselfish love appeared to be the nearest approach to a divine nature which we possess on earth; and he always strove to place the sex on that pedestal for which nature intended them, but from which they so often voluntarily descend. He mourns over the young bride whose husband will no longer demand of her 'a tender, gay, happy heart, but only rough-working fingers, feet never weary, and a quiet paralytic tongue. Thou wert created for something nobler; but do we not see daily how souls are sacrificed because they inhabit a woman's form? On the female mind, as on the female body, is bound an eternal corset. They go from chain to chain.'

Richter was twenty-eight when his first romance appeared, 'The Invisible Dwelling.' For ten weary years he had been

under the severe, educating discipline of destiny. But his *Lehrjahr* (apprenticeship) was at last completed. He stood now on the middle point of life, and from this on till its close, love, appreciation, honour, and fame, were granted to him.

This first novel of Richter's was suggested by his own peculiar employments at the time. In it he has developed his theory of education, as practised by himself towards his pupils. The characters are but projected shadows of himself, and his immediate friends. He knew no other social world. His own autobiography—that of his emotional life—is pictured in the hero, Gustave; for 'the young author' (he says in the preface) 'tries to compress his whole life, with all its overflowing thoughts and feelings, into his first work, as if no second—ay, twenty other openings, did not remain for their expression.' Gustave passes the first eight years of his life in a *subterranean* dwelling, under the care of his teacher (a mystic, heavenly-souled being, designated 'The Genius'), in order that he may not become hardened by a too early familiarity with vice, nor indifferent to the magic loveliness of nature, before his soul is awakened to comprehend her. The chapter describing his resurrection from this grave-life beneath the earth to the living life above it, at the moment of a glorious sunrise, is exquisitely and mystically beautiful. One can imagine the deep psychological truths which are afterwards elicited by the contrast of a fine, spiritual, untarnished nature like Gustave's, with the rude attritions of the world to which it becomes suddenly exposed; and with his own peculiar humour and world-pathos, his laughing emotion and weeping mockery, Jean Paul lays bare the whole system of our false society, 'this sentimental lie,' as Menzel terms it. It is this eternal *dualism* of human life which Richter delights to paint, wherein 'man, like the Egyptian deity, half-animal, half-god, a divine torso, vibrates between the spiritual and the material, as the moon is attracted at once both by the sun and the earth, but the earth binds her fast in her chains, and she looks to the sun only and *trembles*.' But not only does he paint this ever-

enduring antagonism between our two natures, but that also between the consciously gifted mind and its position—between the spiritual and the *practical*—when the rude ploughshare of existence is dragged by the horses of the sun. ‘How often does the soul sink in the struggle, stifled between the low mud walls of *the actual* which surround it, and in whose dull opacity exists no chink, no cranny through which the spiritual light can gleam!’ The soul that sinneth it shall die, is the fatal judgment for whose fulfilment we are accustomed to look only to futurity; but do not souls die here? The soul dies that does not reign. ‘Of what avail,’ says Jean Paul, ‘are all our godlike gifts, if weeks, months, years stream by and they are never evidenced, never invoked? What are all the acts of man? Ever less than his powers and his volitions; and so pass on the years without object or aim—the enigma of life still unsolved, and age after age ripens, falls, and rots, only to manure the one which follows it. Alas! there is nothing left to man when the flowers of youth have fallen, and the singing birds are silent in the branches, but to lie down upon the faded leaves and die.’

When ‘the Genius’ brings the young Gustave to the upper living world, and consigns him to his family, he disappears, leaving one half of a sheet of music with his pupil, and retaining the other portion himself. Gustave’s contains the *dissonance* of a melody, and certain questions. That which the Genius takes contains the *resolution* of the dissonance and the answers. When they meet again in the great world-desert they are to recognise each other by these signs. Here, too, is a mystery.

When we come in infancy from God to earth, is not *life* to us the dissonance, and our earnest seeking, never-satisfied soul the ceaseless propounder of questions which will never receive an answer until we meet God in that *future* life, where alone we shall find the resolution of the dissonance, and the fulfilment of our aspirations?

Richter’s next novel, entitled ‘Hesperus,’ procured him much celebrity and many friends. On its publication he

visited Bayreuth, and there, for the first time, was received into society on an equality with the most distinguished men. He was admitted to the acquaintance of elegant and accomplished women. Here he beheld the beautiful Clotilde, whose portrait he had previously drawn in the 'Hesperus,' from the description of an enthusiastic friend. Jean Paul was an acute observer of the fair sex, and Clotilde seems fully to have understood the value of a *pose pittoresque*. He describes her as 'seated at a window listening to her nightingales, in the shadow of a curtain, so that a slight reflection of rose colour fell upon her face, while her hand played with some fresh-gathered flowers. She is twenty-seven, of a majestic height, and has the most beautifully ennobled expression.'

The story of 'Hesperus' is peculiarly involved. Even Richter advises every reader to provide himself with a biographical dictionary of the characters to assist his memory. A mystic, nympholeptic spirit is one of the leading personages contrasted with an infidel English lord. There is a beautiful silver thread of love running through the story, between the hero, who is the type of an elevated human nature, and a lovely being—half angel, half woman—the type of the idealised senses, as woman is meant to be. She hovers round the strong, defined, sharp outline of the masculine nature, softening, beautifying, adorning all, as the light frieze or acanthus bordering, or flowing arabesques on some lofty mediæval temple. We find much *emotion*, but little *passion* in Richter's writings, for he always strove to paint the true and the eternal—and passions are animal and transient, but emotions divine and immortal. We read often of Christ's emotions—never of His passions. 'Hesperus' is dedicated 'to the world-weary soul who mourns a lost youth and a wasted life; or to those lofty spirits who come forth perfected from the death dust of a broken heart; or to that still nobler soul who, weary of his century and of this sad winter of humanity, filled with lofty aspirations and sublime sorrows, passes on with eyes upraised to the calm eternal heavens, and heeds not the heavy step of death nor the falling forms of his brethren as they sink into the

grave, for he is bound to mortality only by the thrilling hand of a friend which clasps his in the darkness.'

In his next romance, 'Quintus Fixlein,' the object seems to be the distillation of poetry from the commonplace—that true poetry which lies about our feet, and which need not be sought in world-shattering passions or world-darkening obscurity. It is the awful sense of the deep meaning that lies in every moment, in every grain of life that falls upon eternity. It is the visionary eye which, in the commonest, the most ordinary of human actions, can discover the unseen, eternal, mystic thought it symbolises :—

'The lowest life,' says Richter, 'is as poetical as the highest, perhaps even more so ; for there is in it more of symbol ; and they are both but phases of the one humanity. Why live but in remorse or aspirations, in the past or the future ? Each moment, O man ! is to thee an entire life. Enjoy thy *being*, but heed not thy *mode* of being. Make thy present not a mere means to a future, which is but a coming present, as this despised present was once a desired future. Despise our false life that you may enjoy the real. Look upon a city but as an aggregate of villages—a village but as the connected lanes of a city. Consider that joy is but a second, grief a moment, life a day, and but three things eternal—*God, creation, and thy soul.*'

Richter does not ask a prize for having discovered new pleasures, only for having given us a good methodology for enjoying the old. In the preceding works his heroes are lifted above humanity. Here we have the picture of a genial soul acting within the limits of an ordinary week-day life, and elevating that life to a meaning by uniting with it. It is in this novel those beautiful prose Lyrics, 'The Death of an Angel,' and 'The Eclipse' are to be found.

The 'Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces,' his next production, and the best known in this country, where it has found its way even into the circulating libraries, is a tangled wilderness of all mental vegetation, through which one wanders enchanted as through an Indian forest, with its echoes of waving palms, and Ganges streams, and tropical hurricanes of tropes. It

contains essays, visions, one of which is the celebrated 'Dead Christ,' and a romance, 'The History of the Poor Advocate Siebenkass.' It is the most personal of all Jean Paul's works. Under the veil of a fictitious character he describes his own transition from the every-day life of reality to the higher ideal life of poetry and imagination.

Nothing can be more fatally true than the picture given in it of an ill-assorted union, where there exists an unequal standard of mind, and a deficiency of culture in one of the parties. Lenette, the wife of Siebenkass, is incapable of understanding her gifted husband. He married her for her innocence and simplicity, but finds too late that a narrow mind and obtuse intellect is the most unendurable of all companions to a man of genius. His impatient weariness becomes contempt—disgust; and their mutual sufferings convey painful but most truthful lessons. The excellent Lenette is particularly partial to house-cleaning—her whole soul lies in it. She is a sort of incarnate sweeping-brush—an animated floor-cloth—a living ubiquitous duster. The whole house becomes a Gehenna and Tartarus to the poor martyr, Siebenkass. What fearful noises of sweeping, dusting, rubbing, are perpetually murdering the thoughts in his soul, as he vainly strives to think and write in his chamber. Sometimes she walks so heavily across the room, with such resounding clatter, that he remonstrates. The next time she enters in her socks; but this damp, muffled trotting is worse agony. Then it strikes Lenette that she might get over her prayers while her husband is writing; but, if the wretched martyr rises but to watch a cloud or touch the harpsichord, up she jumps, with that detestable grey flannel floor-cloth in hand, that demoniacal sweeping brush, and the martyr groans as if the tortures of the Inquisition awaited him.

Poor Lenette! She was one of those commonplace women who never can be raised from the dull prose of life into a lyrical inspiration—for whom the great mystic universe is nothing but a nursery or a ball-room—whose souls have but the circumference of their thimbles. Yet it was not her

fault. Few, indeed, amongst women are the hearts at once tender and sublime—who can sanctify and indivinate the earthly marriage bond, and raise to yet higher grades the souls to which they are bound—the destinies which they have power to guide. But Siebenkass does meet with one of these gifted and rare beings—only it is *too late*. Now, for the first time, he feels the whole meaning of *to love*. ‘Natalie’ is his destiny. What fiery scenes, what burning words, what bitter partings, now fill up the sad tragedy of his life. And still eternal, immovable remains the gulf between them, which to pass were Heaven, but which Heaven forbids. At length, in a climax of passion and love and despair, he flies from Natalie, and takes a vow never to behold her again until after his death. He returns to Lenette—the poor commonplace Lenette. What a contrast from the brilliant, genius-gifted Natalie! But he tries to endure her, and even reads out some of his most beautiful verses, while she sits at that eternal knitting, endeavouring so to poetise it, if possible; but all the while he hears the under murmur of ‘one, two, three, take up one,’ and is finally interrupted with ‘Stay, my dear, I observe there’s a stitch dropped in your stocking—take care you don’t put it on to-morrow till I mend it.’ He flings down the book, exclaiming ‘Woman! woman!’ and rushes from the room. She has disagreeable ways, too, like all little minds—sneers at ‘learned ladies,’ meaning Natalie, and invariably responds to every remark addressed to her by Siebenkass, whether poetical or profound, with ‘What do you say?’—an excruciating way to meet the low breathings of a poet’s soul. Finally, human nature, or rather gifted nature, could endure no longer the daily crucifixion. Through the assistance of a friend, Siebenkass feigns death—has a mock funeral, and a generous public erects a tombstone over his grave. He, in the meanwhile, escapes disguised, and flies to a distant province, where he gives himself up to a life of seclusion, and dreams of Natalie. In a year he hears that Lenette has married some excellent creature as good and uninteresting as herself. He wishes to be an unseen witness of her happiness, and returns secretly to

his native town. Here he enters the churchyard, and reads above a new-made grave the names of *Lenette* and her newborn infant. Then he visits his own grave, and while musing over himself—at once dead and alive—a veiled female approaches. She screams and faints on beholding him. He receives her in his arms. It is Natalie. She had come to visit his grave, and fancied his spirit had appeared to her. With what burning kisses he awakes her to life and love! and there, standing on his own grave, now free, he receives the plighted vows, the trembling hand, the betrothed kiss of his soul's true love—the gifted Natalie. He has fulfilled his vow. They had never met until *after his death*.

Richter had now become famous, and was pressed to visit Weimar, that focus of savants, where Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland reigned supreme. There he was received with the most fanatical enthusiasm—this tall, slight, pale poet, from the wild Fichtelberge, with his noble brow, clear eyes, in which, like Schelling's, 'shone the might of intellectual command'—and, what is so seldom met with in the face of genius, a lovely mouth. It is Arndt who remarks that all great intellects have two worlds in their face, the earthly and heavenly—two natures, the mortal and the god—and illustrates his theory by Madame de Staël, whose eyes and brow were godlike, while her mouth—but we must not criticise a lady. With his long fair hair floating in natural curls on his shoulders, Jean Paul must have been a most picturesque apparition at the Athenian Court of Weimar. Add to these external advantages his earnest, impassioned manner, with somewhat of an impediment at times, as if the ideas thronged too rapidly for utterance, and

The chariot wheels jarred in the gate through which he drave
them forth,

and his rich, varied, eccentric conversation, like a west wind sweeping before it a whirlwind of leaves and flowers—thus it is no wonder that all the *savantes* and hero-worshipping ladies of Germany pined away for the love of him.

One of the most remarkable amongst these idolatresses

was Madame von Kalb, the Aspasia of Weimar and the original of *Linda*, in Richter's novel of 'Titan'—'with great eyes and a great soul, such as I never met with before. She speaks as others write.' Thus he describes her. But her sentiments on religion and morals startled him, for he worshipped in women not the mere external beauty, but rather that divine inner nature of which he believed they were meant to be the type, and cared little for the gem if the foil of the spiritual were not beneath. He says somewhere—'What a full harmony of word, look, and movement surrounds a woman who *respects herself*!' He wrote 'The Eclipse,' to convey to her a warning, which seems to have been needed, as she declared in one of her letters that with the words law and duty the evangel of love vanishes. His love finally changed to pity and a mournful admiration. 'I will pray,' he says, 'when I think of your heart, crushed as if it had been thrown from rock to rock in the past.' He visited Goethe in his palace—a pantheon of pictures and statues, the cold, one-syllabled god, with a face massive, as if carved out of marble, and 'the stony Schiller, from whom, as from a precipice, all strangers spring back. He is full of power, but without *love*.' How unlike our ideal of the passionate dramatist, with that lovely countenance we behold in his portraits, in which the expressions of Plato and Endymion seem blended! And Schiller's wife he sees 'with her Cleopatra eyes,' and that splendid *Caroline Herder*, familiar with all literatures, versed in all sciences, yet the tenderest of wives, whose poet husband never could write unless she were seated by his side, his visible inspiration! Yet with all this Richter returned home rather *désillusionné* with the Mecca of his aspirations. 'Alas! for my ideal of great men,' he exclaims; 'authors are like planets, to distant regions of space they are light-giving stars; approach them and you find they are but dull earth.' A blaze of flattery was now poured on him enough to give weaker heads a *coup de soleil*, and the German women worshipped him as only German women can. Amongst others the remarkable Julia von Krudener visited him, celebrated with all celebrities, genius,

beauty, wit, and eccentricity. Her lofty, enthusiastic spirit made a deep impression on Jean Paul. She writes to him, 'I have climbed the mountain which little minds have not power to ascend, and the echo of their voices brings no discord to my ear.' This fair transcendentalist was succeeded by a '*femme incomprise*,' the most spiritual of female souls, *nine* parts understanding and but *one* of heart. Richter offered her his hand ; but her 'egotistical coldness, which demands and loves nothing but perfection,' made him tremble for his prospect of happiness. The lady honourably resigned him and happily soon found another who could really love the nine parts understanding (he was a Scotchman), and her marriage released Richter from many a stormy scene. But neither flattery nor fame could fill his soul. He complains at thirty-five years of age that he had been *alone* all his life, that he had never met a man he could take to his heart. Alas ! for the egotism, or rather the soul-solitude of all elevated natures. If they are elevated, it is but to the regions of eternal snow. Like *Saturn*, they are accompanied by revolving satellites, and surrounded by gorgeous rings, but wander how far from the sun of *Love* ! 'We pant and thirst,' says Richter, 'after the love of others. We attain it, and then find it like to quicksilver, which looks truly bright and beautiful as the gushing stream, and so flows and so glitters ; but in reality nothing can be colder, drier, or more heavy.' And now Richter begins to long for a quiet home, and a gentle, wedded partner, who could smile with him, weep with him, and sometimes *cook* for him ! This estimable amalgamation of qualities he finds at length in Caroline Meyer, a gentle, loving, patient, although *learned* woman, who could read *Plato* in the original, and make her own dresses, perhaps all the better for the Greek, and who loved, revered, worshipped her husband, because she *comprehended* him.

The novel of '*Titan*' on which he was employed ten years, was published soon after his marriage. The heroine, Linda, a proud, gifted, self-relying soul, whose law and gospel are only its own generous, noble impulses, is drawn from Madame

Von Kalb, and the fatal effects of her philosophy on the female mind are shown by the tragical fate of the heroine and her moral death, Richter's object being to prove that the catastrophe was inevitable from the principles, and that *character* and *destiny* are the same. There is an amusing character introduced, whose head has been turned by Fichte's philosophy, and who fancies himself for ever pursued by an *objective ego*, from which he vainly tries to escape, while another pure *ego* is within him. At length he dies in a fit of mad excitement produced by a visit from his brother, who resembles him strongly, and who, in consequence, he imagines is the spiritual *ego* at last become objectively visible.

Richter, now tired of the gay and great world, leaves Weimar, 'for it is not good to hold the ear too close to the rushing waves of life'; retires to Bayreuth, where he settles down quietly for life with his wife, this Caroline, 'who was a poet in her life, not for the public.' Here he wrote with untiring energy all day, and in the evening twilight would improvise wild music on the harpsichord till thoughts as wild and beautiful would flood his soul, and he would break out into violent weeping. 'Nothing,' he says, 'exhausts me like *Fantasiën* on the piano. I could thus kill myself.' The fascination which Jean Paul's passionate writings exercised over the ardent natures of enthusiastic Germany is exemplified in the strange history of Maria Foster, who, when he was sixty, and she but seventeen, actually committed suicide for the love of him—this passion having been entirely kindled by his works, for they never met.

The shadows of life were now deepening around Richter, and a fearful sorrow fell on him. His eldest son, a gifted, enthusiastic young man, died from the effect of an overwrought religious feeling acting on a fragile frame. On the day of his son's death Richter began a work on Immortality; it was meant to be a continuation of 'The Campaner Thal,' commenced thirty years before—a work in which occur the most beautiful and profound passages in his works. It was written, he says, to assist the philosophers; for though the critical philosophy

proves truly that we are immortal, yet it is not every one who can stand near enough to the professor's chair to hear his low-voiced evidences. He, therefore, gives the same truths only in a different form, for 'poetry and philosophy are the conjugate foci of the spiritual ellipse ; or, poetry is the electrical condensor of philosophy. It is the spark which flashes through men's souls and heals while it makes them tremble. Unless literature unite *both*, we have a disembodied poetry and an unsouled philosophy.'

Richter never recovered the death of his son, but he still worked on with undiminished energy, though the tears fell fast upon his pages. And so he wrote and wept for a few years longer, until his sight failed. Then he became quite blind, and soon *all* work ceased. He died in 1825, at the age of sixty-three. Richter's writings present great difficulties to the English student ; so involved, diffuse, unmethodised, are his narratives, and so idiomatic his language. That is, he has an idiom of his own, like Carlyle ; indeed those two authors resemble each other strongly. There is the same vivid picture language, and blended wit, poetry, humour, and deep pathos, luxuriating into all strange forms, yet each, as in a kaleidoscope, beautiful and harmonious ; their souls sometimes a camera obscura, on which play the *shadows* of the universe—now a lens, in which its *light* is concentrated to a focus. Each page of Richter is certainly an exercise of mental gymnastics ; but also a treasure chamber of the most exquisite thoughts and images. The whole universe yields him analogies, and everything becomes beautiful to him ; for he looked on everything with *love*, and worshipped the glories of nature with the spirit of a Greek.

His aim in writing, as he proudly and truly declares, was to elevate the sinking faith in God, virtue, and immortality, and in an age of egotism to kindle again the fire of humanity in men's hearts. Like one of his own heroes, 'he had erected an altar to God within his own heart like all men of elevated natures, for it was on the *mountains* that of old men worshipped God and raised temples to his honour.' There is

something sublime in the defence of his writings which he makes in one of his latest works :—

‘In that darkest moment of existence, in *The Last*, oh ye men who have so often misunderstood me, I can lift up my hand and swear that in my writings I never sought anything but the good and the beautiful, so far as my powers and opportunities enabled me to discover them. And you who judge me after a ten years’ agony of a poor, friendless, clouded destiny, warred on by indifference and helplessness—would *you*, I demand, have remained faithful to their worship, even as I have done? But futurity cares little for the labours of a loving heart; only, perhaps after long, long years, when I have passed away and been forgotten, some seed from these my works, cast forth by the hand of time, will spring up in flowers and fruit; and some mourning heart will be vivified thereby, and throb with gratitude—but know me not.’

Jean Paul’s ‘Visions’ have a great reputation. They are ‘grand and mystic as those of a Hebrew prophet.’ Of them, ‘The Dead Christ,’ and ‘The Vision of Annihilation,’ are reckoned the finest by the critics; but even passages such as are appended here, taken from his various works, at any chance opened page, will give an idea of his peculiar style, of the rich treasures of his imagination, and of that heart which, as Menzel says, *raged with love*.

THOUGHTS FROM RICHTER

A POET’S LIFE.

The *universal* is the highest and most daring word in our language, and the rarest in our thoughts. To most men the universe is but the market-place of their own petty, contracted life, and the history of eternity only that of their own town. Who has ever comprehended the universal—the *all* of reality—and flung the light of his genius down its abysmal depths like those twin stars of poetry, Homer and Shakspeare? A great poet is one whose genius in its soul-

wanderings has passed through all natures, all times, and all situations, who has sailed round every coast of the world in succession, and brought back with him bold and daring sketches of their eternal forms. The poets of old were men of action and warriors before they were singers ; and in particular the epic poets of all ages worked hard at the helm, as they steered through the waves of life, ere they took the pencil to sketch the course they had passed. Thus did Camoens, Dante, Milton—thus were the clods of life in Shakspeare, and yet more in Cervantes, broken, and ploughed up, and furrowed, before the seeds of poetry in their hearts germinated and sprung up.

The first school of poetry should be action. Give a young genius employment, not a book. Let him deduce poetry from nature, not nature from poetry.

Truly neither a mentor nor a book, neither shears nor a watering-pot, can give sap and colour to a flower, only influences from heaven and earth.

Above all, *act* ! Oh, in actions lie a thousand times more lofty truths than in books. Actions nourish and warm the *inner* man, while books and opinions only give a surface superficial heat. Be not like children in scarlet fever, who have *burning foreheads* but *cold hands*. *Act* ! Then will the tree of knowledge and the tree of life spring up together ; then will God tend that *faith* in thee which was planted at thy birth ; which no storms of life can overthrow ; and under whose branches thou wilt find shadow, refreshment, and security.

WHICH IS GREATER ?

The gifted soul, who, elevated above the stormy interests of his age, only looks on without aiding to guide them ; or he who in the strength of that wisdom and power he has gained in solitude, plunges into the world-tumult with all his God-given energies, and proves their value by *action* ? Lofty is the eagle when he dashes upward through the tempest to the calm blue ether beyond ; but loftier when he stoops

from that heaven, and with the might of his wings cleaves the dark thunder-clouds that rest over his eyrie, to bring shelter and protection to the trembling unfeathered little ones that lie therein.

I am in general melancholy. Ah, this life is so bitter-sweet, so compounded of nothing and all, an eternal sinking and upheaving earthquake. We see no spectres round us ; but they hang upon our neck, we bear them upon our shoulders, until we become one ourselves. Would that I might sleep *still* and *deep*.

The Tempé vale, the mother land of fancy, is found in *dreams*. The melodies that murmur through that twilight Arcadia—the Elysian fields that cover it—the heavenly forms that dwell therein, bear no comparison with aught on earth. And I have often thought, when awaking from these lovely visions where youth, and love, and hope, and happiness were mine once more, oh, that I could dwell yet longer in that bright dreamland of slumber !

The dead are the fallen columns of the world temple—the living are the upstanding.

A man of greater mental power than his age is an anticipated century.

Learning in heads, and French wine in bottles, become soon of little value unless both are filled quite up to the cork.

Poetry and philosophy as comets and planets revolve round the *one* sun of truth. They differ but in the extent of their orbits. Poets and comets describe the greater ellipse.

It is easier to sacrifice oneself for a man than to *love* him—to confer a favour on an enemy than to *forgive* him.

We are all republicans when we look into *the past*.

What is life but the crystal portal of heaven? We see the glory and the beauty beyond, but cannot reach it. Wait. The portal will one day open.

Genius can be only comprehended by genius. In this sense no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*. Such valet-minds have no basis from which to calculate the parallax of the lights of heaven.

OLD MEN.

Truly, their shadows are long, and their evening sun lies coldly upon the earth; still, their shadows all point towards morning.

CHILDREN.

Do not ye stand nearest to God? It is the least amongst the planets which lies next to the sun.

THE GIFTED.

His soul is the retina of the universe.

THE UNGIFTED.

The man who lives simply through the *understanding*, and without *poetry*, is imprisoned within the limits of the most abject poverty. He resembles an autumn full of fruit, but to which the magic of the singing birds is wanting; or the vast North American forests in their dull, mournful silence, unsouled by any living voice. Great souls have neither model, imitation, nor equal: as the falls of Niagara, the most resolute of all nature's thunders, produce no echo.

Genius has an attraction for sorrow, as the high mountains attract the thunder-storm; but the tempest expends its fury upon them, and they prove the shelter and defence of the plains beneath.

A SOLUTION.

It has been observed that Eve was created *in* Paradise, Adam *without* it; and it is evident that man always retains

something of the original mud adhering to him out of which he was formed.

A PLEA FOR THE FAIR SEX.

Few men would marry a Jeanne d'Arc, or a Charlotte Corday—while to women the attractions of a Brutus, and similar heroes are irresistible. This proves that the *love* of women rests on nobler grounds than that of man. In *friendship* the case is exactly reversed with the sexes.

CAUTION TO GIRLS.

The young men fall on their knees before you ; but remember it is but as the infantry before cavalry, that they may conquer and kill, or as the hunter who only on *bended knee* takes aim at his victim.

LOVE IN MARRIAGE.

To imagine that mere *beauty* is sufficient to keep the marriage bond unbroken, without heart and intellect, which alone can knit it firmly together, is to attempt weaving a garland of flowers without their stems.

CONSTANCY.

Ah, I am living in thine eyes ! exclaimed the child, as he gazed up into his sister's face. And I in thine, too, my brother, she replied. Ay, so long as ye gaze one upon the other, said the father ; for the eyes of men are like their hearts.

DANTE.

When Dante's spirit wished to tread the earth, it found the epic, the lyric, the dramatic eggshells and brainshells too narrow for its dwelling ; so it enwrapped itself in the broad garments of night and of flame, and of the ether of Heaven, and thus but half incarnated, flung itself amid the opposing and astounded critics.

GOETHE.

Goethe's composition has the form of Memnon's statue. All is harmonious in proportion and exquisitely chiselled, but the tone is not *life*; it betrays the mechanism and the hand of the artist. His works are a noble but silent gallery of casts and statues.

SCHILLER.

Schiller's style excels all others in gorgeousness and splendour. Whatever the pomp of reflection, of imagination, of imagery, can give he gives. Yea, sometimes he strikes the poetic harp with such a jewelled hand that, dazzled by the lustre, we half forget the strain.

LUTHER.

Luther's prose was a combat; the deeds of few men can equal the strength of Luther's words.

A NEW YEAR'S NIGHT.

The new year unfolds its portals. Destiny stands between the glowing clouds of the rising sun and the funeral pyre of the departed year. For what wishest thou, Natalie?

'Not for joy. Alas! nothing but its black thorns have ever remained within my heart, for the rose-leaves soon fell, and their odour was exhaled. The brightest sun but heralded the wildest tempest, and the light which seemed to glitter on my path was but the reflection of the sword which the coming day was to plunge into my bosom. No, I ask not for joy, it makes the desiring heart so empty. Sorrow alone can fill it.'

Destiny is portioning out futurity. What dost thou demand, Natalie?

'Not love. Oh, we press to our heart the thorny white rose of love till it bleeds, and the warm joy-tears which fall into its cup first become cold, and then dry up for ever! Is not love, in the morning of our life, bright and glowing as the aurora of heaven. But approach not that radiant atmosphere,

it is formed out of clouds and tears. No, no ; I wish not for love. Let me die of a nobler agony—let me fall beneath a loftier poison-tree than the myrtle.'

Thou art kneeling before destiny, Natalie. For what prayest thou ?

'Not for friendship. No. We all stand side by side upon hollow but unseen graves ; and though our hands be twined together ever so firmly, though our hearts be knit together with the sufferings of many years, yet the slight vaulted roof will fall in. The pale one sinks down ; and I stand alone in a cold, solitary life, beside a filled-up grave. No, no ; but if the heart be indeed immortal when friend meets friend in the eternal world, then may the pulse throb with an undying love. Immortal eyes become dimmed with tears of joy, and the lips that can never more grow pale, murmur—Now I am thine, beloved one. Now let us love, for we can never more be parted.'

Oh, thou forsaken Natalie, for what prayest thou, then, upon the earth ?

'For patience and the grave, for nothing more. But deny me not that, thou silent destiny ! Dry the eye, and then close it. Still the heart, and then break it ! But, when the spirit wings her flight to a fairer heaven—when the new year opens in a purer world—when all again meet and love, then I will speak my wishes. Yet no, for then I shall be happy.'

SOUL SOLITUDE.

There are some fearful twilight moments in our life, when we stand between day and night but belong to neither—when we seem suspended between existence and annihilation.

The theatre of life and the spectators have vanished ; our part is over. We stand alone in the deep darkness ; but we wear our stage garments still, and look on them, and seem to ask ourselves, 'What art thou, poor Mummer ?' At this moment there is nothing grand or true, or fixed for us. All around seems an infinite midnight cloud, through which flashes

some wandering ray of light ; but still the darkness sinks deeper and heavier over us, and only high above the cloud there is a glory, and that is God, and deep beneath it is a glimmering point of light, and that is a conscious human soul.

SYMPATHY.

What is there more painfully or longer sought for than a heart ? When man stands and trembles before the ocean or the mountains, the pyramids, or a city of fallen temples, then he extends his arms towards a sympathising *friendship*. But when melody and moonlight, and the spring and tears of joy move him, then his heart melts, and he desires *love* ; and he who has never sought for either is a thousand times more poor than he who has lost both.

THE ATHEIST.

The denier of a living God, if he succeeds in dethroning the Divinity in his heart, must stand alone in a frozen, lifeless All ; imprisoned in a cold, dull, blind, iron necessity. Nothing lives for him but his own fugitive *I*. So stands the wanderer on the ice seas and the icebergs of Switzerland. Stillness all around. No being that hath motion. All nature frozen far as the eye can reach ; only high above, a light cloud floats past, and seems the one sole moving thing in that immeasurable desert.

COUNSEL.

Say not, '*I will suffer*,' for you *must* ; but say, '*I will act*,' for you *must not*.

The poet is like the chords of a harp : he passes in music out of sight.

THE UNCOMPREHENDED ONE.

There is a crown of thorns upon thy bleeding brow, but immortal roses bloom upon thy breast.

It is not the high-swelling restless wave, but the calm motionless depths that reflect the universe.

Man is like a flower : the wilder the storm so much the more fragrance doth his soul exhale.

Man speaks to man with four and twenty signs : nature speaks to us with millions.

LOST YOUTH

On new year's night, an old man stood at his window, and gazed upward, with a glance of fixed despair, at the eternal, immovable, ever-resplendent heaven, and down upon the still, clear, silvered earth, where none existed so sleepless or joyless as he. The open grave lay yawning at his feet, for the snow of age had fallen thickly over the green verdure of his youth ; and from out that far, rich land of life, through which he had journeyed, he brought with him nothing but sorrow, and sin, and sickness—a wasted body, and a desolated soul ; a heart full of poison, and an old age of repentance ; his fair youthful days wandered now as ghosts before him, and pointed back to that bright morning when his Father placed him on the cross-road of life, which leads on one side along the sunny path of virtue, to a bright and peaceful land of light and golden harvests, where angels dwell ; and on the other, down to the cavern of vice—a dark abode full of coiling serpents, and down-dripping poisons, and loathsome tumid vapours. Ah ! the serpents coiled round his neck, and the poison-drippings lay on his tongue, and now he knew which path he had selected. Frantic, and with unspeakable agony he extended his arms towards heaven, and cried 'give me my youth again ! O Father, place me once more on that cross road of life, that I may choose again.' But his father and his youth had long since passed away. He saw meteors dancing on the morass, and then quenched in the sepulchres : he said, 'They are my days of folly.' He saw a star shoot from heaven, glittering as it fell, until it was lost upon the earth. 'That is my emblem,' exclaimed his bleeding heart, and the serpent fangs of remorse gnawed yet deeper in the wound. His

fevered fancy conjured up mocking ghosts in every object around him. The windmills seemed to toss their mighty arms as if to crush him in their embrace, and in the empty graves there remained but one skeleton—it bore his own form.

But now, as the conflict within him rose to its height, the music that welcomed in the new year poured from tower and steeple like one glorious Cathedral chant—and he was moved. He looked round upon the horizon, and over the wide earth, and thought of his youth's happy friends, who, better and nobler than he, were now instructors of their age, fathers of happy children, and blest among men. 'I, too,' he exclaimed, 'might have slumbered calmly as ye, upon this first night, with tearless eyes, had I so willed. I, too, could have been happy, had I followed your counsels, and your wishes, my Father.' During the frenzied remembrances of his lost youth, it seemed to him as though the skeleton that wore his form rose slowly from the grave, and as, in the new year's night it is given to mortals to see spirits and futurity, so he gazed, until he beheld it change to a form of a young and blooming youth, who, in the attitude of him of the Capitol, bent to extract a thorn. The old man recognised his own youthful features in the mocking illusion. He could gaze no longer—he bent his head upon his hands, while the burning stream of tears poured down, and sank into the snow, and sighed forth, faintly, despairingly, wildly, 'Oh youth, youth—return, return !'

And it did return, for that new year's night had been but a fearful dream, and he awoke in his youth. But his errors and faults had been no dream, and he thanked God there was yet time for him to retrace his steps upon the dark way of vice, and enter the sunny path which leads to the bright land of golden harvests.

Return with him, young reader, if thou too hast strayed down the path of error. This fearful vision wilt be thy judge ; and a day will come, when thou wilt call in anguish, 'Return, my youth !'—but it will never more return to thee.

THE GIRONDINS

ONE never wearies of Lamartine's great work, 'L'Histoire des Girondins.' All the brilliant pathetic, terrible and tragic scenes of that supreme moment of French history are pictured there with an intensity of dramatic force, a vivacity of colouring, and a splendour of diction such as no other poet or prophet of humanity has ever surpassed in grandeur and gloom.

The story of the Revolution commences at the death of Mirabeau ; for Mirabeau's career would have been a history and poem in itself alone. His colossal nature was an incarnation of the whole idea of the Revolution, in its genius, force, eloquence, passion, and world-wide sympathies ; while those who succeeded him but symbolised its separate fractions. Possessing every quality of mind and body suitable to a popular leader : the impressive *physique* which seems instinctively to command ; a tall, powerful frame, a massive head, and broad olympic brow, like a Jupiter Tonans, shadowed with masses of black hair, as if, like Samson, his strength lay in it, says De Staël ; dark, gleaming eyes that scathed or softened as he chose all who approached him ; with the large mouth and full prominent lips, always denoting energy, passion, and impetuous feelings ; his eloquence rapid and burning as a lava-stream ; his voice like deep-toned thunder blended with soft murmuring rain-drops ; a heart that could love greatly, act nobly ; and an intellect to command a world—yet this great revelation of humanity passes away and accomplishes so little ; and thus he stands in history, a grand, unfinished destiny, a broken

promise to humanity, as the unfinished Strasburg Cathedral has been termed 'a broken promise to God.'

Such was the man who stood between the king and the people at the commencement of the Revolution, with one hand sustaining the crown, with the other repelling the democracy. When he died the two came into collision. And as always happens in the world's history, the latter triumphed; for royalty can exist only by the will of the people.

After the death of Mirabeau three distinct parties struggled for supremacy: the Constitutionalists, who desired a limited monarchy; the Girondins, pure Republicans; and the Jacobins, whose name has become a proverb for ferocity and anarchy, but who were destined to triumph over the other two.

Madame de Staël, then in the full glory of her youth, passion, and genius, led the first named party. Lamartine thus describes her:

A man in energy, a woman in tenderness, who wrote like Rousseau, and spoke like Mirabeau—whose life was a dream of genius, glory, and love—a thinker by inspiration, a tribune in eloquence, a woman in attraction, with the beauty, not of features or form, which is all the vulgar can comprehend, but of passionate impulse and visible inspiration. Her large flashing eyes shone with as much love as genius, and you felt that the light of her intellect was only a reflection of the burning tenderness of her heart. There was love, therefore, in all the admiration *she* excited, and she in the admiration only valued the love.

That devoted ambition of a woman of genius to become the inspirer, the hidden destiny of some great man, to awaken his energy and be happy in his glory, this was the necessary excitement of her life, and her salon became a focus of the Revolution, where Talleyrand, La Fayette, and Narbonne came to receive inspiration, and where she employed all the fascinations of her manner and the charms of her brilliant conversation, to keep their enthusiasm burning. This party, however, necessarily expired with the monarchy, and the fierce contest was then wholly kept up between the Gironde and the

Jacobins. While reading Lamartine's brilliant descriptions of the women who led French society at that period, one cannot help animadverting, *par parenthèse*, on the absurd idea prevalent amongst us, that politics should not be discussed by a woman—as if the destiny of her country was not a nobler object for thought and subject for conversation than the gossip of a neighbourhood. French ladies are wiser. There they seize instinctively on this additional instrument of fascination, so neglected by our countrywomen. They are educated for taking part in these grand interests. Their minds are strengthened and enlightened, their *esprit* quickened by the desire to make their conversation interesting to men, and so in place of repelling, they attract the social circle round them. Genius, eloquence, and wit flash on all sides, and a dry political discussion becomes sparkling and animated by the playful grace, quick sympathies, and deep feelings of a cultivated feminine mind.

The deputies from the department of the Gironde, from which place they derived their denomination, concentrated at that moment around themselves all the glory and interest of the Revolution. The party was composed principally of young lawyers from the provinces. Men from the ranks of the people, many of them without rank, wealth, patrons, or position, but whose influence nevertheless, consisting solely in their intellect and genius, overthrew a monarchy and founded a Republic. They were gifted with the most rare combination of talents and noble aims: all young—for the young are needed for revolution—and all enthusiastically devoted to the regeneration of their country.

Incorruptible virtue and a single-minded, noble devotion to the cause were their characteristics, united with a fiery eloquence which throbbed through the country like the beatings of a fever pulse. A Republic in its holiest meaning was what they strove for; a reign of justice, liberty, and intellect, in place of force, despotism, and imbecility. *Danton* had this lofty end in view, but he was the convulsive force that would have marched to liberty through crime. The Jacobins would

only have substituted one tyranny for another—that of the mob for kings—but the Girondists would have established the rights of all, without violating the rights of any. All this, however, was to be accomplished by spotless means. ‘Men of words,’ Danton called them. They wanted liberty without sacrifice, the force of the people without its predominance, patriotism without the fever of delirium or the ferocity of despair. It was a sublime dream, their only error was in believing it could be realised.

‘A woman is invariably the inspiration of all great undertakings,’ says Lamartine, ‘for men have only the spirit of truth, but women its passion.’ One was necessary to the French Revolution, and philosophy finds her in the young, gifted, and celebrated Madame Roland, the heroine and the soul of the Gironde party. The sketch of her character is given with all the enthusiasm of a poet, for it is only a poet that can comprehend fully the soul of such a woman. It is more a deification than a description. Her face, as we see in her portrait, was one of wondrous energy, passion, and genius, Lamartine describes her as beautiful, with soft black hair falling to her knee, blue eyes which darkened with the shadow of thought, a rather large mouth, which words as well as smiles parted and displayed her dazzling teeth, a thrilling voice, the most precious gift a woman can possess, a tall, slight figure, and a bearing of the head which betokens intrepidity.’

Her flashing intelligence seemed inspiration ; she acquired all without study, comprehended all without effort, and convinced by the force of her own convictions. Conscious of the great soul within her, her pride revolted at the homage paid to beings far below her in every endowment, merely because gilded and tinselled with the trappings of society ; and the young girl brought by a servant to see the splendours of Versailles, returned a Republican, and the destined instrument for the downfall of monarchy. Her marriage with Roland was a mere act of heroism, without any love. He had the reputation of being a philosopher and a statesman,

and she enthusiastically determined to consecrate her life to him. But as Roland was at best merely a respectable elderly gentleman, rather given to prosing, the young pupil of Rousseau soon found this uncongenial marriage could not fill her heart, and so she devoted herself to her country as to a lover. Happy and beloved, she would have been no more than a woman—unhappy and isolated, she became the inspiration of a party. She above all had *faith* in the Revolution. It is the divine principle which men need to have daily renewed—this burning energy of believing souls which is so often crushed beneath the dull, tame, petty hindrances that surround them, till at last it dies out suffocated by the dust of the arena, and they come back to rekindle the flame at the glowing inspiration of a woman's soul ; as men feel their mental energies, their divine sympathies reawakened when they stand face to face with Heaven, or breathe the free mountain air, or gaze upon the stars. For enthusiasm in the heart of a woman, like the fire in the temple of Vesta, once kindled is ever burning. They stand nearer to the Eternal than men, farther removed from the combat of party interests. They see only the sublime purpose, not the paltry means which even the sublimest purpose needs to become effectual. They are capable of the purest heroism, sacrifice and suffering, for such is *love* in its truest signification—a *need* of self-sacrifice, a divine feeling that can only fully prove its infinite love by infinite suffering. Such love was Christ's, and is the highest.

To Manon Jeanne Roland her country became the object that filled the infinite necessity of love in her heart. She became the passion, the sentiment of the Revolution, and radiated around her its heat and light. And is it not thus with all women of genius when their first destiny, *love*, has been crushed for ever. Do they not seek some object infinite as their emotions to fill their soul—religion—literature—some life of voluntary immolation where self can be forgotten ? Then, if their country need assistance, from their solitude and isolation they come forth, these pale young martyrs of enthu-

siasm, with souls of flame and eyes 'dark and inscrutable as Jael's,' who have gained knowledge by suffering, and in whom the sword of the spirit has been tempered by their burning tears. Realisations of their own dreams. Fearless, for they have nothing to lose, disinterested, for they have nothing to hope, sublime in their isolation and their suffering, they yearn to breathe forth their life in some act of heroism. In the day of exaltation sublimating patriotism to religion, and in the day of trial proudly demanding their right to martyrdom.

Such was the Egeria of the Girondins. 'Genius and will know their strength, and a presentiment teaches us our destiny.' Scarcely had she come to Paris when she attracted round her all that was noble-minded, pure, and gifted in France; all those earnest, deep, serious, enthusiastic minds of the Gironde party, who, though young, seemed as if they never had known youth. Of these Vergniaud was the leader and the genius. All the strong lights of the picture are concentrated upon him in Lamartine's portrait with its brief sibylline phrases, which strike with the rapidity of vision.

'Vergniaud was then thirty-three, of middle height. His figure firm as the statue of an orator. You felt there the gladiator of words. His mouth was strongly marked, with the lips large and thick, as if destined to cast forth torrents of words, as a river from the open lips of a Triton. His eyes shot forth the light of enthusiasm from beneath the prominent brow; while above them rose his large domed forehead, polished as a mirror in which genius is reflected. His long light brown hair waved with each motion of his head like Mirabeau's. His complexion pale, with something of the ghastliness that bespeaks profound emotions. The vulgar crowd might pass him unnoticed, but when the soul radiated over his countenance, like light upon a bust, his face rose to the ideal, and attained a splendour, even a beauty, which none of his features had in detail—it was the transfiguration of genius. The hour of Vergniaud was excitement—the pedestal of his beauty was the tribune; when he descended, the orator was but a man.'

But Vergniaud's wonderful power and influence arose, not so much from his gifts as a writer or an orator, as from the sublime awful sense which pervaded his being of the holiness of their cause. His life was the calm devotion of his nature—the entire consecration of his soul to a principle. Exertions for his country had, to him, the dignity of an apostleship. He stood far above all paltry motives and party interests. It was for a nation, for humanity, for eternity, he strove and suffered. His power lay in this pure unsullied nature—this genial fire, that acts like sunlight upon flowers—forcing spirits to their proper growth, and still making them look upward as they gain in strength. Always grand in every moment, for he had no egotism—no petty aims. The shadow of eternity seemed to rest on his slightest words and give them an unfathomable depth. His manner was calm, dignified, yet perfectly without affectation ; serious, and somewhat sad ; a worshipper of the fine arts, and himself one of the best poets of the day, he would have passed his life in a luxurious reverie of music, painting, recitation, poetry, and literature, if his country had not called him to be her glory and her martyr. Every one loved him, yet each felt the immense distance by which his mental power separated him from them. Devoted to the people, yet he never descended to flatter them : all his passions were noble as his words. Too sublime to be ambitious, too grand to hate, he seemed to disdain the homage of admiration and the rights of sovereignty, because his soul revolved in a sphere far beyond the glories of either. Such is the impression which all his actions leave on our mind of his character.

The gentle, romantic Louvet is the next most remarkable man of the party. He edited the Gironde journal, '*La Sentinelle*,' in which the most ardent patriotism was associated with the worship of order and humanity. His young wife, Lodoiska, whose spirit was filled with the same enthusiasm for liberty, literature, and glory, assisted him in his studies, and her love was his inspiration. With more of the simple sunny tenderness of the woman in her nature than Madame

Roland, she loved her country for the sake of her lover, and the Revolution as the means of his glory and celebrity.

Louvet was then somewhat about thirty, of small stature, with a pale, expressive face, light hair, and blue eyes full of feeling, in which all the poetry of his nature seemed ever burning; a noble pensive brow, fair as a woman's; and an habitual expression of melancholy, which was not languor, but earnest, grave resolve—endowed with genius rather than talent, and of heroic courage, the writer, the orator, and the hero were combined in one. Many of his speeches equal Vergniaud's in eloquence and deep pathos; less exciting, perhaps, but they sank into the soul with a yet deeper impression. If destiny had not called him to be one of the first political leaders of the day, he would undoubtedly have been the first author. He and Madame Roland became devoted in their friendship to each other, and she speaks of him enthusiastically in her memoirs—for women much more readily appreciate *genius* than talent. It is said that many of the best articles in his journal were written by her. Thus she competed with Vergniaud in eloquence, and with Louvet in composition. Her genius was felt, though her sex was unknown. 'She fought *masked* in the arena of parties.'

Each day brought new adherents to this brilliant circle—for political ideas become a thousand times more active when ensouled by sentiment—amongst them the young Isnard, but twenty-two, from the sunny south: the orator of the party, as Vergniaud was the genius. 'His words fiery as his blood, and glowing as his southern skies; his speeches were magnificent odes that raised discussion to lyricism. The people followed him breathless, and were kindled to enthusiasm, to fury, before they attained conviction.'

And Guadet, the handsome, impetuous boy, whose soul you could read as through a crystal vase. Scarcely twenty, yet already his reputation was established in the kingdom for that splendid talent whose passionate utterance seemed wrung from his heart with tears. And Buzot, whose pensive Italian

beauty, grace, gentleness, and melancholy genius even touched the heart of the queenly Roland ; and others came—

Winged persuasions and veiled destinies,
Splendours and glooms and glimmering incarnations.

But we must not pass over ‘the brave and beautiful Barbaroux,’ with a face like a Greek statue, and a soul like the Greek fire : him who wrote to Marseilles, ‘Send me 600 men *who know how to die*’—his genius had been first evidenced in poetry, and his political life was but poetry in action—and the sparkling Ducos, friend and pupil of Vergniaud, ardent, rash, brilliant as youth and inexperience, and his inseparable friend, Fonfrède. They and the handsome Grangeneuve, whose patriotism outran his judgment, formed the extreme of the Gironde, who wished to force matters to a crisis with the frenzy of young Jacobins. Vergniaud’s policy seemed too cold for them. ‘They were prepared to die, but wished to die combating.’ Empires, they exclaimed, can be saved by blood, but never by tears. The calm, grave Gensonné, though considerably their senior in years, was also, like them, willing to trust more to bayonets than declamation. Sieyès, the statesman of the party, held the balance between them. They listened to him with respect, as being the oldest amongst them, and from a certain traditional glory which radiated round him as having been the friend of Mirabeau ; but he had neither passion, ambition, nor genius. ‘He possessed the *sang froid* of intelligence, without intrepidity of daring.’ His opinions were rather counsels than resolves, and though his efforts tended to reconcile them, yet he only lamed the action of both.

The great political act of this great party of the Gironde was finally the revolution of August 10, which abolished monarchy, and established a republic.

At this period they ruled France, but the unceasing animosity of the Jacobins tended every moment to their destruction, and they wanted resolution to oppose force to ferocity. At any time had they leagued with Danton and Dumouriez, they could have crushed the cowardly, malignant Robespierre,

and the brutal Marat, and saved the Revolution from the infamy which now covers it. But they hesitated ; and, in revolutions, to hesitate is to fail. Their genius, purity, and unselfish aims, were a perpetual reproach to the corrupt, selfish, intriguing Jacobins. Petty minds pardon anything sooner than grandeur of purpose in their antagonists. This nobility of fame is worse than a nobility of blood, they exclaimed. Vergniaud was the first to fling down the gage of war against the Jacobins in the National Assembly, and the wretches whom they held in pay to sow discord in the ranks of the Nationalists, 'who dishonoured the most glorious of causes by the baseness of their means and the insolence of their pretensions.' Incessantly the young Girondists combated against this tyranny of corruption, venality, and ferocity. Day and hour, with an intrepid eloquence, they fought against discourses sharpened like poniards, and which concealed death in every phrase. But, unfortunately, they contented themselves with declaiming when they ought to have crushed by force. 'Of what use are all your laws and theories ?' said the bold Danton ; 'the only law in revolutions is to triumph—the sole theory for a nation is the theory of existence. Save ourselves first, discuss theories afterwards.' The impetuous young Ducos, Grangeneuve, and Fonfrède—the extreme section of the Gironde party—urged Vergniaud in vain to trust to arms rather than words for the future ; but Vergniaud, too courageous to fear death, was yet too profoundly versed in history and politics to allow himself to be deceived by the different plans they proposed. He shuddered to take upon himself the ruin of his party ; and, looking around, he saw no real force to which they could trust for support against anarchy. His genius even discouraged him ; for his far-reaching glance discovered only an abyss, where they imagined would be an outlet from their difficulties. What he dreaded above all, was not his own proscription and death, and that of his friends, but the insane insurrection of the people, the frenzy of the mob, and the destruction of all law.

In considering the causes which led to the fall of the

Girondins, we must not confound the Revolution with the crimes of Marat and Robespierre. Everything really grand and permanent in that Revolution was accomplished without violence—calmly and deliberately, by the will alone of earnest, resolute men ; and thus the Constituent Assembly in two years swept away more abuses than an English Parliament would in fifty.

It is a fearful error to maintain that the régime of the guillotine gave liberty to France. On the contrary, it destroyed it ; for the Convention was no longer free when a mob, excited by furious demagogues, dictated its orders of blood and proscription, and the noblest patriots were immolated at the demand of a handful of anarchists and assassins.

The Jacobins at any time were never more than a faction, where all the selfish jealousies, the personal rivalries of narrow minds, all of base and mean that enters into and forms the dregs of any grand manifestation, were collected as in a sediment. The sole aim of their policy was to drag everything down to their own infamous level, and the hideous, disgusting Marat was their truest representative. He had but one weapon, brutal force ; one theme, violence ; one hope, spoliation. He incarnated the insane, feverish impatience of the class which lies lowest in society, to cast off the fetters of thrones, governments, and laws, as if they could thus break the triple fetters of labour, oppression, and misery. He edited an infamous journal, which was but the howlings of the mob written in blood, and was supported only by the very dregs of the populace, men who, like himself, were objects merely of disgust and contempt.

Robespierre's character is more complicated. 'He is the last word of the Revolution, which none can read.' Yet his countenance reveals much. There is cruelty in the thin, compressed lips, with their smile half sarcasm, half sinister softness ; treachery in the uncertain-glancing cold blue eye, half covered by the eyelids ; malignity and envy in the yellow-green complexion ; and fanaticism in the narrow, retreating

forehead, yet projecting strongly over the brows, for there was a certain degree of cunning and quickness in the man which almost became intellect, but which is the farthest possible removed from genius. His character still remains an enigma to many writers ; but yet every action of his career can be clearly interpreted as the result of a nature compounded of envy, suspicion, egotism, and cowardice. His ambition was the offspring of vanity, not of conscious force. He could not soar as an eagle to the summit of power ; but he crawled as a reptile—killing those who opposed him with his venom, when he dared not strike as a man. The Republic he dreamed of was a reign of mediocrity, when he would have passed the scythe over all that rose above his own miserable standard. The Gironde, on the contrary, would have instituted a rule of the highest natures. Divine right to them consisted in the divine ability to reign.

The eulogists of Robespierre talk much of his Republican plainness and simplicity ; but his mode of living, in place of being a virtue, only proved the smallness and meanness of his nature. There was nothing generous, expansive, or genial about him. He gnawed at life rather than quaffed the vital goblet fresh and foaming. The tendency of all beautiful natures is to have a beautiful world around them, but Robespierre was content with one—mean, sordid, and narrow as his spirit.

There is something of the old Puritan blood (which he sprang from, they say) observable in this, but he wanted the Puritan courage. Not one act of his ever served to advance the Revolution—he only drowned Liberty in the blood of her purest advocates. He was a coward on the 10th of August, hiding himself in a cave, while Vergniaud and the others were proudly and fearlessly overthrowing a monarchy of twenty centuries. A coward during the September massacres, which he had helped to organise—a coward when he barred his windows as the tumbrils loaded with his victims rolled heavily by. Not like Danton, who, with all the obliquity of his moral vision, had at least *courage*—and many virtues are bound up with that. He, when arraigned on his trial, could exclaim, ‘I

looked my crime steadily in the face, and I did it.' And so he died proudly like a heaven-defying Titan.

There is a certain dramatic grandeur about Danton, with his strong words that echoed like a charge of battalions; his gigantic force of will and reckless ferocity of daring. No meanness—no egotism. He committed crimes, but not to profit by their results; and when his terrible policy failed to produce the anticipated effect he retired from the leadership, flung down the reins like Sylla, and leaped from the chariot when he found the wheels were clogged with blood. Of all the Jacobin leaders, the young St. Just combined most strongly the fascinating and the horrible. With brilliant genius and the wildest idolatry of liberty, he was cruel, not from malignity, but from fanaticism, carried almost to insanity, to that uncertain limit which separates genius from madness. Frigid as an idea, sententious as a maxim, his policy was that cold impassibility of a logic which makes the heart dry as a system and cruel as an abstraction. He looked on politics as a combat to the death, in which the vanquished should be victims. Yet his countenance was mild and beautiful as a St. John; with clear, open, visionary eyes, and a low, measured, impressive voice, as if each word were a prophecy—a revelation. Men called him the Apocalyptic. His courage, whether in council or the field, was as eminent as his genius. 'Dare!' was his motto. 'That word is in itself a revolution,' he said—'they who make one by halves are only digging their own graves.'

It was against such leaders, unrestrained by any principle, unscrupulous regarding any means—a combination of ferocity and insane fanaticism—with the dregs of the populace for their supporting faction, and a system of murder and levelling fanaticism (which is the worst exaggeration of despotism) for their policy—that the pure noble-minded Girondists, gifted with all but *statesmanship*, opposed but *words*.

No one can deny that it was their duty to have saved the Revolution from this infamous tyranny. By not boldly claiming their right as leaders, and avengers of the brutal excesses

of the Jacobin faction, they placed themselves in the dilemma of becoming either the accomplices or victims of the mob. Their weak, temporising policy condemned them to be the latter. If after the September massacres, planned and executed by the Jacobins, the Gironde had boldly leagued with Dumouriez to avenge the outraged laws of justice and humanity, as was their duty—invited him to march his army upon Paris, and crush anarchy and murder by *force*, all the subsequent horrors of the Revolution would have been spared and its glory eternised.

Danton's advice was good—'Never risk the Revolution in a street battle without the cannon on your side.' By not crushing this horrible faction by force—energetic force, they permitted the name of liberty to be blasphemed throughout the world, and by that means lost to the rest of Europe all the results which the glorious primary principles of the Revolution would have gained for suffering humanity. If France had never known a Reign of Terror, all Europe would be free at this hour.

The Jacobins, however, were resolved to prevent the coalition of Dumouriez and the Gironde. They therefore denounced him at their infamous clubs; and as their denunciations were always equivalent to death, Dumouriez, with the most unaccountable cowardice, hesitated to accept the struggle, deserted his army, fled to the Austrians, and sacrificed a fame and destiny which might have been the highest in France, if he had so willed it, only to become the despised pensioner of England.

The desertion of Dumouriez made the cause of the Gironde hopeless; for what can even the most lofty principles effect if unsupported by power? and they made no effort to organise an armed resistance against reckless men who had boldly violated all law, justice, and humanity, and covered the Revolution with their own infamy.

The genius of the Girondists (says Lamartine) made them the fittest instruments in a revolution; but they wanted daring to become its dominators. They were constantly ad-

vancing, but without well knowing towards what. Always destined to give the impulse, never the direction. They had the virtue to resist atrocious means, but not resolution to adopt necessary expedients. They could not save their country, but they made her illustrious. Their greatest fault was trying to govern when they ought to have combated. Prudence is the last virtue for revolutions. Timidity the worst vice. They wanted plan, policy, and, above all, audacity.

Their history is, indeed, full of profound maxims that teach and prophecies that warn, for everywhere in the progress of revolutions we find the same genius and the same characters liable to the same fatal mistakes. If the opinions they advocated were based on truth, reason, and the right of humanity, then for these rights it is imperative to combat, it is glorious to die. If men are once sure of the principle which sways them—that it is of God—then let them fight for it through Gethsemanes, and Golgothas. All governments, whether of one or of one thousand, are only entitled to our obedience in so far as they carry out the principles of eternal justice and the moral law. When a government sins against that law, the instincts of the people and the reason of the philosopher revolt at the infraction; and such revolt is not only admirable, heroic, and holy, but it is *duty*, the clearest of man's duties; for in so far as we tamely submit to the infraction of the eternal laws of justice, we are as guilty before God as those who have broken them. The man who does not fight *for* a truth is as guilty as the man who *violates* it. There is no such thing as negative virtue. All virtue must be active. Vice only is the universal negation. *Faith* in a cause is worth armies. Were people to wait till the chances are apparently in their favour, no great deed would ever be accomplished. Truly says Goethe:—

What you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness hath genius, power and magic in it.

There must be a certain trustful casting of oneself upon destiny, leaving the consequences to God. Our duty alone is

to act—whether it be a nation, a party, or even one man against an empire, a world. It is not *number* gives the right to combat, but the *cause*. If that be just, then, though we stood alone against a world, we must preach, we must combat, we must press onwards to the truth though we tread the flames to reach it.

If there are men in every age—Immanuels, Gods with us, to whom the Lord grants clearer views of truth, it is that they should utter them in words and deeds. He touches their lips with living fire, though often at the same time he consecrates them as martyrs ; for success is not always granted to those most worthy of it ; nor should calculations of success ever enter the minds of patriots or reformers as an impelling or retarding motive, though no proper means should be neglected to ensure it.

‘It is *not* necessary to live,’ said Frederick the Great, ‘but it *is* necessary to act.’

Events are in the hands of God, but man’s path is clear, to do his duty, inscribe his principles on his banner ; then

Fling it fearless in the face of Heaven.

The prominent events which hastened the fall of the Girondists are of course familiar to every one ; but no poet or historian has given the last scenes of the sad drama with such touching sublimity as Lamartine. One can scarcely read for tears. Day by day, slowly but surely, the circle of their enemies closed round them like a coil of fire. The fierce denunciations and malignant falsehoods of the Jacobins had excited the mob, always so ready to side against the noble and the pure—and open violence or secret assassination perilled them at every step. On the first night the Republic was proclaimed they met together at Madame Roland’s. Pale with emotion, her eyes lit with supernatural fire, she seemed already to behold the scaffold as the termination of her glory. Vergniaud, upon whom every eye was fixed as the author and leader of the new Republic, was calm, serene, and melancholy, with the quietude of conscious genius and stern resolution.

He rose, filled his glass, and proposed to drink to the new Republic. 'Let us sprinkle rose leaves on our wine, like the ancients in their solemn feasts,' exclaimed Madame Roland, as she scattered the flowers from her bouquet. Vergniaud held his glass to receive them ; then bending to the young Barbaroux, he murmured : 'Barbaroux, it is not roses but cypress we should scatter on our wine to-night, for who knows but we are drinking to our death—but, no matter, were this wine my blood, still I would drain it for Liberty, and my country!' 'Vive la République !' they all exclaimed with one voice, undiscouraged by this mournful image. They were ready to accept all from the Revolution—even death !

But of what avail are reason, eloquence, and sublimity of purpose without power ! And the Jacobins alone had the armed sections of Paris under their influence to make their words deeds.

'Look at those men,' said Danton, pointing to the Girondists ; 'there is not one of them worth even a dream of Danton's. Men of words—they are sleeping on the echo of their phrases.'

Vergniaud's last measure was to obtain the appointment of a commission of twelve to watch over the safety of the Republic, and guard against the murderous plots of Marat and his infamous followers. 'Men of the Gironde,' he exclaimed, '*dare to be terrible or you are lost.*' But a deliberative body is the worst instrument to employ at a political crisis. They only retard a victory. Marat, supported by the populace, triumphed over their powerless denunciations, and the cry of 'Death to the Girondins !' resounded yet more fiercely in revenge from the clubs, where Marat and Robespierre reigned supreme.

At length, aware of the extremity of their danger, they met together for the last time at an isolated house in the suburbs, not to deliberate, but to fortify themselves against death. 'Sublime words were heard and buried in that night.' Next day they boldly presented themselves at the Convention, in the midst of their enemies.

It is painful to follow the death struggles of such men.

Henriot, the Jacobin general, and his armed battalions, surrounded the assembly with their cannon, threatening death to all unless the twenty-two most prominent men of the Gironde were delivered up to them.

From the benches of the Jacobins, from the tribune, from the populace, from the armed bands, there was but one cry—‘Down with the Girondists ! death to the twenty-two !’

The decree of arrest was passed rapidly, and amongst the twenty-two conducted to prison were Vergniaud, with Ducos and Fonfrède, the young Jacobins of the Gironde, who would have had Danton for a leader if Vergniaud had not existed ; Isnard, the eloquent, magnificent orator ; Grangeneuve and Gensonné, Barbaroux, Louvet, Buzot, and Guadet, had escaped to the provinces (which had all declared for the Gironde), but only to perish some of them still more miserably. Louvet and his Lodoiska alone survived all danger, and found a refuge in Switzerland.

Their enthusiastic leader, inspirer, and the high-priestess of their faith, was the first to enter the prison. On hearing of the danger of her friends she drove to the Convention, demanding admittance and to be heard at the bar. After many efforts she gained an entrance, and spoke with Vergniaud. ‘Let them hear me,’ she entreated, ‘I will tell them truths a Republic should hear. I will awaken them from their stupor.’ Conscious of her genius, eloquence, and courage, she felt as if she must dominate over the cowards of the Convention ; but Vergniaud dispelled her illusions, and turned her from her purpose. Then pressing her hands in his for a sublime farewell, he returned to the assembly moved, yet strengthened for his own approaching fate. Next day she was arrested, and never left the prison till she ascended the scaffold.

The cell in which the Girondists were confined for the four months preceding their trial has been lately opened, and the walls were found covered with inscriptions written by them—not one betrays weakness or regret. They are hymns to constancy, defiances of death, or appeals to immortality expressed in brief phrases or latin verses, and most of them written with

blood. There is something agonising in looking at these stone tablets on which such men have imprinted their last thoughts with their substance and their life. There is one inscription before which everyone pauses. It is written in large bold letters with blood, and is the hand of Vergniaud—

Potius mori quam foedari !

It was the motto of his life.

All these innumerable inscriptions show the stoical intrepidity of men who, conscious of their lives, had no fear to die. 'These stone walls, like the victims they had enclosed, bleed, but do not weep.'

Their friends were admitted to take leave of them. Amongst others was a child, nephew to Vergniaud. The boy wept with fright when he beheld the livid face and miserable garments of the celebrated prisoner. But Vergniaud took him in his arms. 'My child,' he said, 'look on me well, and remember when you are a man, say that you have seen Vergniaud, the founder of the Republic, in the grandest moment of his life and in his proudest costume, that in which he suffered for truth, that in which he died for liberty.' The child remembered the words, and fifty years afterwards repeated them to the author of the Girondins.

Their trial lasted seven days. As they entered the Hall of Audience on the first, the crowd gazed with wonder and pity on their calm, serene faces, all so young and some so beautiful.

Vergniaud was the last to enter. All Paris had seen him formerly in his majestic perspective on the pedestal of the Tribune, and even now expected from him some dazzling display of eloquence which would gain triumphs like those of Demosthenes or Cicero. From such men one expects everything, even the impossible. But he was no longer Vergniaud of the Convention. His dim eyes, sunk, hollow cheek, and livid colour, proclaimed him only as the prisoner of the people.

He looked not like the ruins of his youth,
But like the ruins of those ruins.

Men wept involuntarily on beholding him, but no longer trembled. They looked only on 'the dying gladiator.' At midnight on the seventh day of trial, judgment of *death* was pronounced. One of them, Valazé, fell back when he heard it. 'What! you faint?' they said indignantly. 'No, it is death,' he replied, drawing the poniard from his bosom, with which he had just stabbed himself, and fell dead at the feet of his judges. Ducos and Fonfrède, the two ardent, impetuous young Jacobins of the Gironde, who loved like brothers, embraced each other, weeping. 'My friend,' said Fonfrède to the young Ducos, 'it is I who have brought thee to this death. But courage, we shall die together.' Does not this recall a similar midnight scene, just five years later, in another land, when two young brothers, like them, passionate patriots, victims of tyranny and martyrs for their country, embraced each other weeping, uttering almost the same words, when the sentence of *death* pronounced against them resounded through the court? We, too, have had our martyred Girondists and our *legal* Jacobins. The prisoners returned to their cell chanting the *Marseillaise* in chorus, as a hymn of triumph. They supped together that last night of life; some of their friends were admitted; and the table was covered with the rarest wines, fruits, and vases of flowers, while innumerable torches lit up the walls of the prison. Nothing in their demeanour or brilliant conversation betrayed men who were to die *to-morrow*. It reads like that strange scene in Victor Hugo's 'Lucrèce Borgia,' of 'the living dead,' where the young, gay, beautiful guests quaff the poisoned wine which they know not contains death, while invisible voices chant the funeral psalm—

Os habent, neque loquuntur; oculos habent, neque vident; aures habent, nec audiunt.

But as the hours passed and morning approached, the conversation became more solemn—their voices lower, smiles vanished, and their words fell grave and heavy as the strokes of a hammer upon a tomb. Each gave his opinion upon the

truths of religion, and their hopes of a future state. But when Vergniaud spoke all were silent. He discoursed, like Socrates, long and eloquently on the immortality of the soul. Never had his brow, his look, revealed more genius, or his deep voice thrilled more profoundly through the hearts of his hearers. He seemed to speak from the tribune of God. 'Why should we doubt of the recompense,' he exclaimed, 'when we have paid the price? Have we not all given our faith, our blood, our life, for liberty; and when man thus offers himself a victim to God, what can he do more?' 'It is true,' they answered; 'Christ died also upon the scaffold as a witness for truth.' Then they rose to prepare themselves for death.

As they left the prison for the scaffold, they commenced chanting the *Marseillaise*. Arrived at the foot of the guillotine, they embraced, in sign of the communion of liberty, and then recommenced the hymn, until the lips of each were silent in death. Each stroke of the axe diminished the strength of the chorus. At length one voice alone was heard. It was that of Vergniaud, who died the last, breathing out his life in a hymn to liberty. 'And when their heads rolled to the feet of the people, youth, beauty, genius, illusions, enthusiasm, and antique eloquence seemed to have perished in France.'

CALDERON.

TOWARDS the close of the sixteenth century we find two great names, lords of the drama of the world—Shakspeare and Lope de Vega. Both were about the same age, Lope being only two years older than his illustrious contemporary, and both were the worshipped idols of their respective nations, and the flattered, honoured, petted, caressed favourites of a court. Shakspeare was dazzling and delighting the brilliant Elizabeth of England, while Lope was winning smiles even from the gloomy Philip of Spain, amid the chill horrors of the Inquisition, and the flames of the heretic *autos*.

No author of any age or country ever equalled the Spanish Lope in fertility and fluency. Shakspeare left but thirty-six dramas; Lope left a thousand to the world. They poured forth from his brain with the facility of improvisation; all full of powerful scenes, broad, reckless fun, and exciting life and force. With such qualities it is not surprising that he lived adored by his nation, and has remained ever since the most popular dramatist with the multitude.

Like most men of his era he began life as a soldier: nerve in the arm and fire in the brain. He served in the great Armada sent against England, and wrote a long poem while going as an enemy to the land of Shakspeare. Tall, dark, and handsome, with bright loving eyes—so he is described—full of genius, warmth, life, and brilliancy; ever warring or writing, loving or loved; pouring forth the inexhaustible fulness of his human heart with exuberant joy into the channels of all life; and thus he stands out like sunlight thrown upon the dark

fanatic spirit of his age. But sorrows fell upon him ; he was left wifeless, almost childless ; then he, too, became infected with the gloomy religion of his country. He took orders, was made a monk of St. Francis, and a familiar of the Inquisition ; and later in life grew so fanatical, that he often fasted till he fainted from weakness, and scourged himself till the walls of the room were sprinkled with his blood.

Spain was ever a loving mother to Lope—honoured by her in life, and glorified in death ; for when he died, such a funeral train followed him to the grave that still runs the proverb in Spain, to express the acme of pomp, ‘It was a burial of Lope.’

But let us turn back to the year of grace 1600, when both Lope and Shakspeare were in the prime of life, glory, and mental power. Lope was then thirty-eight, Shakspeare thirty-six, and Cervantes, their great contemporary, fifty-three. It was a brilliant literary era, and no doubt the world thought it impossible that successors should ever rise fit to wear the laurel wreath when death lifted it from such brows. Shakspeare indeed left no successor ; his mantle fell on no second prophet ; but in that year 1600, a child was born in Spain, destined for greater celebrity even than Lope de Vega, and surpassing him in genius and power as much as Shakspeare excels all who have borne the title of English dramatist. That child was Pedro Calderon de la Barca. Four years later the great Corneille was born in France. So, just as the twin stars of the sixteenth century were declining from the zenith, those of the seventeenth century were rising to the meridian. They might even have met had an *entente cordiale* subsisted then amongst the nations, such as we have witnessed lately, when the chief names of Europe congregated from all meridians to one focus ; and let us suppose a dinner given to the congregate literati at such a time, say about the year 1615. Cervantes might have presided in virtue of his age—he was then sixty-eight. On either hand are Lope de Vega and Shakspeare, in the prime of life, fame, and manhood ; while the younger and less gifted poets, Ben Jonson,

Massinger, and Ford, Beaumont, and Fletcher fill the sides ; last of all, we see two youths, one fifteen, the other but ten, yet of both already have been heard prophecies of fame. The elder, with the beautiful face of genius, dark, lustrous eyes, and flowing hair, is Calderon from Spain. Though but fifteen, he has already written a play which Lope praised. The younger youth has a low, stunted, mercantile aspect—no beauty in him, only a grave equanimity and self-possession, that saves him from being called vulgar. Though but ten, he has written verses that men have talked about, and so people turn the head to look at him : he is the young Corneille from Paris ; his future glory already the vision of his youth. But one still younger, a beautiful child of seven years old, with long golden curls, rests his arm on Shakspeare's knee, and looks up into the great poet's face, with large, blue, worshipping eyes—the child is John Milton ; he who afterwards wrote of Shakspeare's works that—

Kings for such a tomb might wish to die.

Now let us just add Rubens in a corner to sketch the scene, for he too was then in the prime of life ; and the whole galaxy, without any anachronism, might thus have been handed down to posterity. But if we suppose a similar dinner organised the following year, we find two places vacant that none dared to fill, and the rolling course of centuries has never filled them since—Shakspeare and Cervantes were both in their graves.

We are not going, however, to discuss these vast celebrities of a memorable age, these Titans of literature with 'the large utterance of the early gods ;' our glance rests only on the handsome Spanish youth ; and of him let us try to gather from the past all that is worthy to live in the present.

Calderon came of a good family. Aristocrats all of them, and devout Catholics, who had held office at court under a succession of royal fanatics. He himself was educated by the Jesuits ; hence, perhaps, the serious, profoundly grave tone of his mind. While yet a child he learned all, conquered all, and

at fourteen had written a drama. Then he entered the army, as Cervantes, and Lope, and Ercilla had done before him, and served twelve years ; but unlike them, he seems to have been not much of a warrior. We hear of him still writing, not fighting. Finally, when Lope died, and the court found existence impossible without a dramatic poet, he was recalled from the army, and made superintendent of court festivities at Madrid. After which, to the end of life, we find him living, as Goethe at Weimar, the idol and oracle of a court, that brilliant court of Philip IV. of Spain, the patron of poets, and himself a poet and dramatist. But all this time there is no mention of Love in Calderon's life. Lope loved many times, and married twice ; Shakspeare married, at nineteen, a farmer's daughter, eight years older than himself ; Cervantes married ; Corneille married, and left six children ; and though Camoens remained single, yet it was for the undying love he bore his lost Catarina. But Calderon—did he ever love ? We know not. Little can be gathered of his inner emotional life from the records left of him ; at all events he never married. Yet his nature was neither severe nor morose ; rather was it a serious, mournful nature—full of grave, calm tenderness, as of one who sympathised with all human weakness, yet was himself above all. Very kindly too, if not loving ; for we read how he was wont to gather the young children round him on his birthdays, and tell them tales of his own early life, or recite verses to them with that sweet voice of his, which has been specially eulogised by his biographers. His writings indeed show that he deeply studied human suffering and passion—had laid his hand on the quivering fibres of human hearts ; but then it was as a physician who notes symptoms, or as a stern judge who examines to condemn. There seems no pity in his stern justice. With such a nature it is not surprising that when youth and middle age were passed, he should seek the grave, dignified sanctity of sacerdotal life ; and so we find him at the age of fifty-one taking priest's orders, as Lope had done when heart-crushed by the suffering that comes of love and death.

Afterwards Calderon became Court Chaplain and Grand Inquisitor ; and thus lived for thirty years, still enchanting Spain with his brilliant dramas, and honoured as poet was never honoured before, by king, court, and nation.

Oh destiny ! what a capricious weaver of fortunes art thou ! Cervantes fought and suffered, lost an arm in battle, and was sold as a slave into Algiers for eight years ; then, having made the Spanish name for ever illustrious in literature, was left to die by the Spanish nation, poor and friendless, in one of the lanes of his native city. Camoens served his country and fought her battles bravely during forty years of a lonely unhonoured life ; then wrote a poem that makes the best literature of Portugal synonymous with his name. Yet he dies in an alms-house, blind, poor, starved, and miserable—one faithful negro slave the only friend by his deathbed, the only mourner by his grave !

In addition to his great genius, Calderon had great industry ; 500 plays are attributed to him, and through his long life we find the unrelaxed labours of his mind still creating, still producing, though in the later years of his old age these productions were limited to pieces on sacred subjects. He died at the age of eighty-one, on the Feast of Pentecost, while all Spain was celebrating his *Autos*, and he himself was composing one ; trying even in the last death-weakness to finish it for the Corpus Christi Day. And so, says Solis, the historian, his friend and contemporary, our Calderon has passed away singing, like a swan.

The great dramatist lies buried in the Church of San Salvador, at Madrid ; and above the marble tomb, upon which the great mental deeds of his life are recounted, is placed a half-length portrait of him, life size, by Juan de Alfaro, court painter to Charles II. of Spain.

Calderon's personal beauty was remarkable. The high-domed brow, bearing ' the strong impress of divinity,' resembles Shakspeare's more than any other portrait of the age ; and the countenance is one of wondrous calm beauty and majesty ; it is the face of a Christian Plato—uniting philosophy with

sublimity. The white hair crowns the brow, like snow upon the lofty Alps ; and the large clear eyes seem to read into the very soul, severe with thoughtful earnestness ; while over the entire countenance, features, and expression, is diffused the unmistakable impress of a lofty, spirit-gifted nature. His eyes and the melody of his voice have been expressly noticed by contemporaries. One writes thus describing him :—

The grave, majestic beauty of his face ;
The fine capacious brow ; the glorious eyes,
And sweet melodious voice.

Before analysing Calderon's plays, it may be interesting to trace the various causes which had an effect on Spanish poetry, and the Spanish drama, the most national and idiomatic in Europe. The Arabs, we know, held Spain from the eighth to the fifteenth century, during which long dominion they exercised an immense influence upon the language, customs, and literature of the Spanish nation. All the Spanish forms of poetry are indeed derived from them except the dramatic. Oriental literature was narrative, descriptive, amatory, eulogistic, and satirical ; romances, ballads, and all species of lyricism, full of love of nature, and metaphors drawn from her varied beauty, and adorned with quaint conceits, acrostics, anagrams, antitheses, and elegant hyperbole, were familiar to the Moors ; but they had no drama. The Spaniards merely inwove all these Oriental peculiarities into the dramatic idea which spread over Europe from Italy, where the clergy had appropriated that powerful and expressive form of antiquity for the service of the Church, and used it as a means whereby to instruct the people in the history and dogmas of their faith. These religious mysteries, in which the holiest names were freely introduced in a manner at once irreverent and absurd—although the intention was by no means anything but devout—were at first acted in the churches, with priests for actors ; but gradually the exhibition passed from the sanctuary to the theatres, and hired actors and secular subjects replaced the sacred legend and the sacerdotal performers.

Thus the Spanish drama had its origin and dates from the fifteenth century. At first the popular representations were nothing more than rude, coarse, amusing, one-act pieces, performed by strolling players in the streets and squares of the city. Then the court adopted the idea, and produced dramatic festivals with considerable splendour ; still, moveable painted scenes were not introduced until so late as the middle of the sixteenth century. Even up to that period the comedies were but grotesque buffooneries ; the tragedies ferocious and disgusting absurdities, where all sorts of verse were mingled, and all extravagances of plot and diction practised and enjoyed. Yet some of the writers of that early timé have still a celebrity in Spain, though foreigners only take interest in the drama from the sixteenth century, when the voice of the young Lope de Vega began to be heard, and soon no other voice would be listened to. After that period the name of Calderon becomes the fullest expression of the Spanish drama, and has thus reigned without a rival up to the present day.

Lope de Vega improved on the vulgar drama ; Calderon made it beautiful ; for still he worked upon the old basis ; still we find love, jealousy, and revenge the leading tragic element of the Spanish stage, developed with true Oriental passionate excess—such scrupulous jealousy as we have no idea of, but which is natural in the East, where woman is considered but as property ; and such savage revenge as we can scarcely believe credible, did we not know how lightly human life has ever been regarded amongst the Orientals, when a purpose was to be gained or an insult avenged. In judging, therefore, the startling excesses of the Spanish stage, we must remember the deep Oriental tinting of Spanish blood, which has given so many beautiful and picturesque elements to the national life, yet also accustomed the national mind to ideas of cruelty and ferocity unknown to more northern nations. Fanaticism seems, indeed, inherent in Spanish nature—the result, perhaps, of their Celtic origin and political position. Perpetual warfare with an infidel foe made them fanatics in faith and remorseless to the invader. In the conquest of the

New World these qualities again found means for exercise ; the victims were Pagan, and scarcely even acknowledged as human, while the Spanish conquerors, the fierce and fanatic products of civilisation, fancied all crime pardonable when shadowed by the banner of the cross. The expulsion of the Moors, the persecution of the Jews, and the establishment of the Inquisition, strengthened these tendencies. Dark, gloomy ferocity existed at home against Moors and heretics, and abroad against idolaters and Indians. All crimes, even the most revolting to human sensibilities, were familiar to men's minds, when in any way their purpose could be connected with the advancement of the faith. But free thought could not exist in Spain. Who would dare to think, with the Inquisition by their homes and hearths, and the memory of Torquemada, with his holocaust of six thousand victims burned at the stake, present to their minds ?

Thus, while Spanish military glory attained its highest eminence under the imperial Charles, and the nation became intoxicated with pride, conquest, wars, wealth, and adventure, fanaticism was at the same time exhibiting those gloomy terrors which reached their darkest excess under his descendants.

Philip II. was a stern, cruel bigot, who himself witnessed the *autos* of his heretic subjects. His son, imbecile and profligate, had no power to infuse free mental circulation amongst the people. Philip IV., the patron of Calderon, and he who entertained the English Charles at his court, was indeed splendid, courtly, and magnificent ; yet also fanatic and profligate—the doom that seems fatally heritable by all Spanish sovereignty. Carlos, his son and successor, a weak miserable being, died childless ; and so ended the great Austrian line of Spanish kings—a race of warriors and bigots, as if they inherited at once the majestic strength of their great ancestress, Isabelle of Castile, and the imbecile weakness of her daughter Juanna. All civil liberty, all religious freedom, was crushed by them ; yet the Austrian age still remains that of Spain's highest military glory and highest literary excellence. The nation was then

first in power, splendour, dominion, importance, and magnificence. The Bourbons succeeded, French influence became paramount, and nothing great has ever been heard since of Spanish mind or Spanish might. Every step from that era has been downward. Indian blood left its stain upon the gold of the New World, and a curse seems to have rested ever since upon the possessors.

The great Austrian era was especially productive of dramatic energy. Daring adventure, romantic novelty, and the fearlessness of conscious power, excited all hearts ; that full tide of life rushed through the pulses of the nation, which makes youth dramatic, for dramatic vigour requires a great history. Men's minds are then so stirred, they must either act or speak in action ; and thus the greatest political eras are always succeeded by the highest dramatic, because the dramatic is the highest expression in literature of mental energy. The lyric, pastoral, and philosophic poets require rest and calm ; but the dramatist ever follows in the wake of the storm. Not even could the horrors of the Inquisition stifle the energetic life of the national heart. Lope, a familiar of the Holy Office, wrote the gayest of comedies, and Calderon, Grand Inquisitor, the finest secular dramas ; but fanaticism forced the mental faculties more especially into that province of literature which deals with manners and social life rather than with abstract principles ; yet even in this province, which, in Shakspeare's hands, became the medium for the utterance of so much profound, lofty, and independent thought, how little we have analysed of our mystic and compound nature. The result is given, but not the mental workings that lead up to it. Crimes are committed, deep tragedies of murder and revenge unveiled, but we are not allowed to see the process by which the actor justifies the crime he commits. One would think that deep inner world, where the two voices, representatives of our two natures, are ever questioning and replying, was in Spain guarded by the Church, even from the vision of the poetic seer, lest some of her dogmas might be questioned or her dicta impugned.

The artistic form in which the spirit of any nation becomes manifest depends on the climate, the customs, the religion, and the history of that people ; and Calderon is completely the incarnation of his nation, his age, and his religious faith. He does not reveal himself in his works any more than Shakespeare ; but in each poet we read the minds of two great sections of the human race—the northern and the southern—one ever hovering over the deep abyss of abstraction—ever analysing the spiritual, the unseen ; the other ever striving to represent emotions by the most vivid sensuous images. Feudalism, Catholicity, and Oriental influences made the country of Calderon ; and the whole ritual of thought and spirit of the three united is reflected in his works. The old feudal loyalty to their king—the old chivalric worship of woman—the old fealty to the banner of the cross, was the traditionary religion of Spain ; but Eastern blood made their loyalty slavery, their religion fanaticism, and their love the selfish jealousy of a tyrant over a beautiful captive. Thus in Spanish character, we find the heroism of a nation of warriors, the pride of a nation of nobles, and the fidelity of a nation of Christians ; yet withal, the Spanish race is just what Calderon represents them—slaves to their king, tyrants to their mistress, and bigots to their faith.

The period at which Calderon appeared was most favourable to his genius. He found a perfect language, the noblest and most beautiful of Europe, as an instrument ready to his hand. The national mind had the vigour and force of conscious political power, for Spain had then no political equal in the world ; all the resources of wealth were at his command to produce the creations of his brain with gorgeous scenic effect, and the most brilliant of Spanish kings was his friend and patron. It was the culminating point of Spanish glory, whether in war or literature, that era of Calderon ; and he had great men to study, great predecessors, and great contemporaries. Cervantes, Lope, Gongora, Quevedo, Mariana, had all uttered the thought that was in them when he first took up the pen. Saafi had flourished, and Hafiz had sung ; and

all their rich Oriental imagery had warmed the Gothic blood of Spain ; Copernicus had revealed the heavens, and Columbus the earth ; Corneille was rivalling him in France, and Solis was his friend. Solis, whose history of the conquest of Mexico—beautiful and coloured as an epic poem—might well make all other historians despair of rivalling such enchanting eloquence. Thus Calderon did not create Spanish literature, as Dante created the Italian, and Shakspeare founded the English drama ; but he was the last chief stone that crowned the building. No great name comes after him ; he remains alone and undethroned, the summit of Spain's literary glory in the seventeenth century, when Spain was indeed glorious. We do not speak of English authors having had any effect upon Calderon's genius, for there is no proof that he was acquainted with our language, and no Spanish version of Shakspeare existed in his time.

Besides these high influences of history and cultivation surrounding the great poet, there was also the variegated dramatic life of Spain perpetually passing before his eyes ; its picturesque magnificence of dress and customs ; the noble manners, with that stately grace, in common things, which still marks the Spaniard ; the varied dramas evolved from the tranquildest life in that age of war, adventure, and intrigue ; every street scene was then a picture framed in the romantic architecture of their semi-Moorish towns, and vivified by the gay brilliancy of costume and the *picaresque* manners of the lower classes ; while the tournaments and religious processions, the feasts and dances, were all dramatic interludes, acted daily under the blue arch of heaven. These the poet analysed and perfected, grouped them with a painter's vision, and produced, finally, the whole national life, its history, poetry, romance, action, and superstitions, in a series of perfect and beautiful pictures upon the stage.

Even the prevalence of the one passion, love, as the main-spring of so much Spanish tragedy, which to us seems monotonous and tame, is but another national characteristic, as marked in Spanish nature as their pride or their fanaticism ;

for to a Spanish woman love is life, and life is love. She gives all to it, and asks all from it ; such love as the snow maidens of the north can neither feel nor inspire, no more than they can rival in beauty the warm-tinted orientalised daughters of Spain. But of the life of intellect a Spanish woman knows nothing, and therefore we find them only endowed, by Spanish dramatists, with those qualities which instinctively are associated with the word woman—grace, fascination, all-powerful beauty, all-subduing tenderness, all-conquering love ; and these truly are the especial gifts of ‘ Spain’s dark-glancing daughters,’ as if the cestus of Venus, or the knowledge of some magic love-philter had been given as heirlooms to their race—that beautiful race with the large floating Oriental eyes, flashing with the impulsive passions of a mortal, or languid with the seductions of a *houri*, such as the Arab prophet beheld them in vision ; the exquisite forms, undulating as an acacia, graceful as a bayadere, yet with the majesty of a sultana in walk and movement ; and the fairy-glancing feet—who has not heard of the Andalusian foot ? or who can forget, if they ever witnessed, the amazement, the dismay, the horror of a Spanish girl at first beholding one of our northern *shoes* ? Indeed, Alexandre Dumas asserts—and his authority is of course perfectly canonical—that they are accustomed to make boats of them in Spain, in which whole families descend the Guadalquivir from Seville to Cadiz. How, then, can we, of the race of the frost giants, taking this firm hold of earth which it is proved we do, alas ! by practical mensuration, comprehend how much of fire and electricity, of passion, jealousy and crime, these floating, burning, seductive visions of love and beauty diffuse through Spanish life—this race, blended of the odalisque and the sultana, in whom the intellect is ever indolent, and the passions ever in delirium.

But the great artist himself—he who fused all these varied elements in the alembic of his genius, and produced resultant forms so perfect and indestructible—of him let us speak now. What waves of melody come rushing on the memory as we think of Calderon—the grave, earnest, believing, Catholic

Calderon—the poet-priest. In him, too, was blended the Oriental and the European. This is especially evident in his style. There is the occasional energetic laconism of the Oriental—the grave aphorisms that fall like ancient oracles on the ear—the flowing capricious harmonies of his verse, gorgeous and elaborate as the gilding and colouring of Moorish architecture ; while saintly and solemn comes, mingling with all these, the grave ascetic philosophy of the priestly devotee—ever preaching the *vanitas, omnia vanitas*, of life, and the grand cadenced words roll round the thought like organ symphonies.

It is this blending of East and West which makes him stand alone amongst the poets of Europe, so that his works seem to one like a stately Gothic temple, adorned with arabesques of the Alhambra. There is also the full Oriental love of nature in him, with the crowding metaphors drawn from her ever changing aspects, which were the delight of Eastern poets.

Menzel, speaking of the poet Rückert, says beautifully : ‘He went forth to wander amidst the flowers, and from every blossom went up a new song, till the dreaming poet found himself in a strange land, where flourished a wild, luxuriant vegetation, and native and Eastern flowers twined round him, and every flower woke a song of love, and his pen was never weary, for melody was his nature, and its utterance his instinct.’ Thus is it with Calderon : all nature sings to him—the stars in their glory, the flowers in their evanescence. Amidst the melodies and mysteries of creation his spirit walks freely, as through an infinite garden, while his language seems ever striving to imitate the varied harmonies of the universe ; sometimes rising into the most spiritual lyricism—

A music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It is felt as an odour within the sense.

Then you meet some grand thought struck out boldly and distinctly from the mass by the change of measure, and the words fall on the idea like regal robes upon a king—you are

compelled to pause and render homage ; or a particular sentiment is woven into a series of perfectly finished sonnets, and you come upon them at intervals like jewelled clasps upon a chain of gold. In truth, there is no form of beauty into which this wondrous Spanish language—this compound of Latin and Arabic, the grandest, and most sonorous, most majestic of Europe—cannot be wrought by the magic might of Calderon ; yea, sometimes, as Jean Paul says of Schiller, ‘ he strikes the poetic harp with such a jewelled hand that, dazzled by the lustre, we half forget the strain.’

Calderon’s dramas are all lyrical, rhymed or unrhymed, according to the excitement of the scene : thus, in passionate passages, the verse always rises into perfect rhyme. The metre is generally trochaic, of eight or seven feet, but a thousand variations of measure are to be met with, to imitate which must be the torture and despair of any translator. Denis Florence McCarthy, however, has endeavoured to render into English all the metrical forms of the original ¹ ; and none but a Spanish student can comprehend the immense labour, the amount of poetic skill, the great mastery of language, the many high natural poetic gifts, requisite to produce even an imitation such as we have received from him. And yet translations far more powerful might have been produced, if in place of striving after impossible resemblances in form, he had given simply the spirit of the original in our own natural, strong dramatic verse.

All poetry has two elements—thought and form. The former is indestructible, and can be poured from one language into another, without dissolution of its essence ; but the latter can never be dissevered from the language in which it was born, without almost total extinction of its vital beauty—for each nation has lingual forms as peculiar and idiosyncratic as the physical conformation of the people. Race is marked in idiom as in blood : thus the French cannot endure or comprehend our blank verse, while in the kindred German nation Shakspeare has been naturalised word for word, measure for

¹ *The Dramas of Calderon*, 2 vols. By D. F. McCarthy, M.R.I.A.

measure. Now, the language of the drama everywhere should be that in which the highest passion and excitement of a nation finds natural utterance ; and as iambic blank verse approaches nearest to lofty English prose, therefore is it the most thrilling in the English drama—for the drama is meant to represent, not a visionary world, but intense phases of actual life. All nations express passion differently ; in the north it is grave, measured, and emphatic ; in the south, rapid, voluble, and always tending to rise into lyricism. We may observe this difference even in common life. How, as an English orator grows excited, does his language assume an emphatic condensed measure, which, if taken down and slightly arranged, would be found the instinctive utterance of excitation in the ordinary dramatic form of blank verse ; while the torrent-like volubility of the excited southern, the rapidity with which vowel sounds can be poured out, the regularity of their grammatical forms, the similarity of the verbal terminations, and the strong accent thrown on them, especially under excitement, all give the sensation to the ear of a song or recitation ; in fact, a strongly marked lyrical measure. But, in place of the strong syllabic accent which makes lyricism so natural to the south, we have only the accent of emphasis in English—an accent not springing from rules of prosody, but intentional and mental in its origin ; and of all poetical measures, blank verse is the fittest to convey this emphasis, the power of the line falling properly on that particular word which natural passion would instinctively emphasise. Open Shakspeare at any page, and we find how this leading requirement of passionate expression is provided for by the construction of the line—hence the marvellous strength and power of his verse ; but open Mr. McCarthy's volumes at any page, and we find how, by the unfortunate measure he has adopted, the emphasis falls almost invariably on the most trifling word in the whole line, annihilating natural emphasis completely

Yet Mr. McCarthy says, with apparent pride, that he has given the original line for line, with closest fidelity. Granted ;

but imitation is not life. Titian, copied in a lithograph, or with all his brilliant colouring given in Berlin wool, is not the glorious Titian of reality. On this very subject of form, Frederick Schlegel, a good authority, says, speaking of Calderon, 'I am so sensible of the high perfection of this great and divine master, that I think he cannot be too much studied as a distinct and inimitable specimen of excellence, but least of all is the external form of the Spanish drama suitable to us ; to imitate this is the height of absurdity.' Even setting aside national distinctions, the style of no great genius is imitable, for style is part of the artist's soul, peculiar, individual, eternally and only his—the full visible expression of the energy, melody, force, depth, and tendency of his own genius ; and a Calderon has not been twice created. Occasionally, indeed, we meet with one of those Promethean men who can breathe life into the clay, draw forth the spirit from another's work, and shrine it in the form they have copied. Such was Shelley : and in his scenes from 'The Great Magician' of Calderon, we for one instant feel the entire beauty of the great Spaniard transfused into English. And such a work also is Dr. Anster's 'Faust' so complete in its perfection, that it has rendered all other past efforts forgotten, and all future efforts unnecessary. Yet while allowing that such a translation as Dr. Anster's is, and could only be, the work of genius, we must add that, in transfusing German into English, we translate from a kindred tongue, all the forms of which find a natural echo in our own : and therefore perfection in such a task is not absolutely hopeless ; while the endeavour to represent southern harmonies by English equivalents is a task so difficult, that, even with genius such as Mr. McCarthy's, success might be impossible. We allow that he is generally very accurate ; and though his volumes cannot be called poetry, yet they will be found of immense use to the student of Spanish ; a copy in clay of the original marble—not beautiful, certainly, but valuable as giving the English reader an idea of the celebrated Calderon in his varied moods, which could not otherwise be attained. Mr. McCarthy has given translations of six of Calde-

ron's dramas, including 'The Constant Prince,' 'The Purgatory of St. Patrick,' and 'The Physician of his own Honour ;' all of which have an immense celebrity, both in and out of Spain. With reference to the last, Ochoa says—'When a foreigner speaks of Spanish literature, his first words are of the inimitable Don Quixote, Lope de Vega, and the "Medico" of Calderon.'

The 'Constant Prince' is a noble and affecting drama, of which heroism, not love, forms the interest. Prince Ferdinand is the hero, son of Joam, king of Portugal, and of an English princess—that Philippa of Lancaster, of whom it is recorded that on her death-bed she presented each of her sons with a sword, and bade them use it for God, the oppressed, and their country. These sons proved worthy of her : Ferdinand, by his heroic fidelity to the faith, and noble endurance of suffering, became the saint and martyr of Portuguese history ; and Prince Henry, another son mentioned in the drama, was the daring navigator of the fifteenth century, whose name still holds a distinguished rank amongst maritime discoverers. In 1437, these two royal brothers undertook the conquest of Tangiers from the Moors, but were defeated, and Ferdinand, being taken prisoner, was kept till his death in horrible captivity and servitude, refusing to the last to surrender Ceuta to the Moors, the price demanded for his freedom. These are the historical facts on which the drama is founded. First we see him, full of hope and pride, proceeding with a noble fleet to Tangiers ; then comes the battle and defeat ; after which he appears as a prisoner, but still one royally treated. Freedom waits but on his own word—the surrender of Ceuta. The King of Portugal sends the warrant for the town to be given up, but Ferdinand tears it with his own hands, and refuses to believe the king could really mean to give up the altars of God to the desecration of the infidel. Then he is presented to us degraded by the revengeful Moors to the lowest slavery ; he appears denuded of his royal garments, chained, clothed as a common captive, toiling at the common work. This contrast of mind and position, the cruel degrada-

tion and the high philosophy with which it is borne, the sublime resolve of self-sacrifice rather than inflict the shadow of a stain upon his country, is a truly noble, though a tragic picture. To his friend, who wishes himself dead rather than behold these tortures of his prince, he replies calmly—

A man of noble soul should ne'er complain
Of fate, Don Juan ;
An example should by us be given
Of patience, valour, fortitude, my friend.

To his fellow-slaves, who would still show him reverence as their prince, he says—

Pay me no idle courtesy ;
Death comes to-morrow and makes all things equal.

The Moorish king's daughter descends to the garden, and seeing him toiling with the common slaves, asks how he has fallen so low from such a height of royalty. He answers by a beautiful sonnet, in which he bids the flowers preach to her the evanescence of all earthly glory, beginning—

These flowers awoke in beauty and delight
At early dawn, when stars began to set ;
At eve they leave us but a fond regret
Locked in the cold embraces of the night.

This sonnet is admirably translated, with the exception of one line towards the end :—

'Tis but to wither that the roses bloom ;
'Tis to grow old they bear their beauteous flowers—
One crimson bud their cradle and their tomb.

The green calyx is truly cradle and grave in one, and to this Calderon alludes, for he makes no mention of *crimson* buds ; his words are—

Cuna y sepulcro en un boton ;

and the dictionary of the Spanish Academy gives the very word *calyx* as the Latin synonym for *boton*. But to return

to the prince. Still farther cruelties are heaped on him. He is represented wretched, diseased, starved, dying, begging by the way-side for a morsel of bread—a Lazarus full of sores, and none but the dogs to pity him. Still, to all the insults of the Moorish king he answers mildly—

My patience shall his cruelty exceed.

Finally, the King of Portugal sends an army to rescue him at any cost; but Prince Ferdinand has just died—his last words a defiance to the Moor, that he may triumph over him, but shall never triumph over the Church.

The dead body of the prince is then shown from the walls, lying in his coffin, and robed in the dress of the religious order of which he was grand master, this last request of his having been granted by his enemies. The next scene is fine and dramatic; the dead Fernando appears to the Christian army, and incites them to the combat; then, with a torch in his hand, and clothed in the robes of his order, leads them on to the walls of Fez, where they obtain signal victory over the infidel foe.

The Moorish princess is taken prisoner, and the drama ends by her being exchanged for the corpse of the prince, which is carried back to Portugal by the victorious troops—

To the solemn sound and sweet
Of trumpets, and the drum's low music,
Marching in the usual order
Of interment; and so ends
The Lusitanian Prince Fernando,
Firm and constant in the faith.

There is a slight silver thread of love involved in the play, between the Moorish princess and the Moorish general; but love is not the interest of the drama, which rests solely on the firmness, death, and apotheosis of the victim. Mere patience is not a dramatic virtue certainly; but in the patience of Ferdinand there is inflexible patriotism, high Christian devotion, and the true heroism of voluntary acceptance of suffering

for a principle. In this lies the grand nobility of the picture, not in the mere courage that can endure.

The 'Physician of his own Honour' is a domestic tragedy, and must be one of the most fearful to witness ever brought upon the stage. The scene is laid in Seville, in the reign of Pedro the Cruel, called Pedro the Just by his flatterers ; and Henry, Count of Trastamara, the king's illegitimate brother, is one of the principal characters. This Don Enrique was much beloved by the Castilians, and from his munificence received the name of Enrique of the Benefits. The king became jealous, fancied he would usurp the crown, and so persecuted him unremittingly. Pedro well deserved the title of cruel, for he murdered the mother of Enrique, and poisoned his own wife, Blanche of Bourbon, in order that he might marry his mistress ; but at length he fell into Enrique's power, who slew him with his own hand, and reigned in his stead. This gives great force to the slight incident in the drama, where Enrique, handing the king his dagger, accidentally wounds him in the hand, and the king rises up disordered and terrified at the sight of blood—a foreboding of the future highly effective on the Spanish stage, where the allusion was at once understood. But the royal history forms no part of the drama : Enrique is only introduced as the leading cause of a terrible domestic tragedy ; and the king that he may administer inflexible justice : yet, knowing that such characters and such crimes as Pedro's were familiar to Spanish minds, we may wonder less at the spectacle of swift, implacable, deadly vengeance displayed by Calderon, which to those unaccustomed to the fierceness of Spanish revenge, seems a picture too revolting for reality.

The story is one of jealousy and revenge. Enrique has been the lover of the young and beautiful Mencia. He goes to the wars, returns, and finds her married. They meet ; with tears, prayers, and at last, with the daring of despair, he solicits her love. They are alone, for he has bribed the servant to admit him to Mencia's chamber during her husband's absence. She resists with noble dignity ; not even in thought will she

wrong her husband : yet gently, pitying the despairing lover, tells him that his love must ever have been hopeless, for she was too humble to be his wife, too proud to be his mistress.

The husband returns and finds the dagger of the Prince, forgotten by him in his flight. This dagger and her confusion arouse his first suspicions. On taking leave of her again, she asks tenderly why he will not embrace her ; when he suddenly throws back his cloak, and she perceives the dagger of her lover in his hand. As her dismay becomes evident, he says, as if quite unconscious of the cause—

What makes my Mencia fear ?—
My joy, my treasure, and my *wife*.

This is one of the many fine dramatic situations which abound in Calderon. From this onward we have the perfect innocence of the beautiful young wife in strong contrast with the dark, remorseless purpose of her husband gathering strength every hour. Still he makes no accusation—he only watches. One night he returns stealthily to his house, thinking to surprise his guilty wife. He finds Mencia sleeping and alone, the light beside her. He extinguishes the light, and calls her softly by name. She awakes, and fancying it is the Prince again, entreats his *highness* to leave her, as he cannot hope every night to escape the vengeance of her husband. This is terrible ; her innocence is so spotless, her love for her husband so high and true, yet every word she utters is her own death-warrant. She calls for a light, and the husband then advances, speaking loudly as if but just arrived. Mencia receives him with rapture, but he says aside—

Her false caresses strike my bosom chill.

She tells him the air blew out the light as she was sleeping. He answers :—

I do not wonder at it, darling mine,
Because the air that killed this light of thine
Was breathed out by a zephyr wild and bold,
And then ran circling round so icy cold

That of this you need have little doubt,
Not lights alone, but *lives* it could blow out.

Can it be jealousy, my lord, you feel ?

Mencia asks him. He still dissembles, and replies :—

Jealousy !

As the heavens live, I know no pang like this.

Then he breaks forth in passionate frenzy :—

If I had grounds to fancy what might be
This phantom terror you call jealousy,
Whoe'er the object, I would cruelly tear
Out bit by bit the warm heart she doth bear ;
Then, as the quivering fragments came,
Reeking with blood and liquefied in flame,
I would the red drops as they fell
Drink with delight, and eat the heart as well.

But, as the memory of past tenderness rushes upon him, he changes suddenly to this wild burst of love :—

O God ! O God ! my Mencia, Mencia dear—
My good, my wife, the glory of my skies !
Dear mistress mine—oh, pardon by thine eyes
This wild disorder, this strange burst of grief,
Which, past conception, past all sane belief,
A mere chimera of the brain did cause.

Yet still, convinced of her guilt, he leaves her, muttering to himself—

I called myself physician of my honour,
And in the earth shall bury my dishonour.

The third fine scene is where Mencia learns that the Prince is going to leave Seville in despair of her love. This terrifies her ; the reason will, perhaps, become public—her name will be disgraced. She resolves, therefore, to write one line, and entreat him to remain to save her honour. She enters her closet to write, and the curtain falls behind her. The husband appears, lifts the curtain noiselessly, leans over her, and

snatches the letter from her hands. Mencia turns round, sees him, and faints. He looks at her as she lies, 'a living statue of cold snow,' and writes underneath the letter—

Thou hast but two hours to live ; save thy soul—to save thy life is impossible—

then leaves the apartment, locks the door, and dismisses all the attendants on different pretences. Mencia returns to consciousness, reads her death sentence, and finds herself a prisoner. Frantically she tries both door and window—they are barred : she calls her attendants—no voice answers ; and her exclamations of horror, agony, and despair are the last words we hear from Mencia's lips ; and the scene closes on this terrible tragedy of torture, where yet the victim is innocent of all crime.

The vengeance of the jealous husband is strange and horrible. He returns, bringing with him a surgeon, blindfolded. In the antechamber he removes the bandage, and bids him wait for his return. Then he again lifts the curtain, and enters his wife's apartment, where he remains some moments. What passes in this last mysterious interview of the avenger and the victim we are not told. He returns ; then bids the surgeon draw back the curtain, and tell him what he sees. The surgeon answers—

An image

Of pale death—an outstretched body
Which upon a bed is lying ;
At each side a lighted candle,
And a crucifix before it.
What it is I cannot say,
As the face is covered over
With a veil of taffeta.

'You must kill that living body,' the husband replies. 'Drop by drop let the life-blood flow ; I shall watch you from this spot, and if you hesitate your life is lost.'

The surgeon enters. The husband holds back the curtain, and watches the slow process of the murder. We hear no cries, or tears, or prayers from the victim ; no word of pity

from the avenger for her youth, her beauty, her young life—all so ruthlessly destroyed. His soliloquy as he watches is one of triumph that he has cleansed his honour by blood thus secretly and securely, and a half-uttered purpose to kill the surgeon as he leaves the house, that no witness may remain of the deed. Thus the scene closes.

The next scene, Gutierre, the husband, is leading back the blindfolded surgeon ; they suddenly come upon the king with his attendants. Gutierre flies ; the surgeon tears off the bandage, and in the fulness of his terror tells the king of the murder and the death. He has no idea of the victim, only he heard her sob forth her protestations of innocence while dying ; but on leaving the house he had marked the door-post with his bloody hand that he might know it again. By this token of the bloody hand the house of Gutierre is recognised, but no punishment falls on him, and the play ends by the king giving him one of the ladies of the court in marriage, who says she does not fear to take his hand though it is stained with blood.

One can see from this slight sketch what powerful stage situations, what a series of dramatic tableaux, unequalled by any dramatic author, the gloomy pencil of Calderon has painted and his brain engendered. Yet the absence of *love* in Calderon's nature is evident throughout all his works. The lighter comedies are all intrigue and gallantry, and in the higher dramas the love is lost in the feelings of jealousy, revenge, and honour, from which he draws such powerful terrors. Nothing can surpass his tragic effects ; but how different were the souls of the men who drew Othello and the Medico. Othello does not care for or think of a conventional honour ; he is not an outraged 'husband'—he suffers as a betrayed lover. The Medico is insulted, and avenges, not a wronged heart, but a stained honour. Poor Othello writhes at the thought of 'Cassio's kisses on her lip.' *He* does not take a second wife, or go to the wars—he is wrecked.

The highest excess of dramatic power, terror and gloom, has certainly been reached in this drama, and in that other of Calderon's, entitled 'Secret Vengeance for a Secret Wrong.'

Here, too, the wife is innocent. She fancies her first lover dead, and marries another ; but he returns, and in the disguise of a diamond-merchant presents her with her own gift-ring, on which she promises to meet him that evening in order to justify herself. The husband discovers the assignation, and resolves on vengeance. The lover is just entering the ferry-boat to convey him across to Leonora's garden, where they are to meet, when the husband comes up, and, pretending to know nothing of his object, asks leave to cross with him. They enter the boat, and the lover is seen no more. How he is murdered, we know not ; but in the next scene we are present with Leonora in the garden, from which the distant screams of the murdered man are audible, though she little suspects they are the last agonies of her lover. Presently the husband jumps on shore, and tells her, as if it were a matter of perfect indifference, how a man called Don Lope has unfortunately been drowned while crossing. Leonora faints ; and he bids them carry her to her chamber, while he tells the by-standers to see what a loving wife she is, who faints at the mere apprehension of her husband's danger. To kill her secretly is his next resolve ; in some way that he shall have vengeance, yet the world never know of either her crime or his revenge ; so he sets fire to his house, suffocates Leonora, and then appears upon the scene with his wife dead in his arms, lamenting over her as if he had vainly endeavoured to save her from the flames. Thus he has 'secret vengeance for a secret wrong.'

In both these powerful dramas of Calderon it is still the tragedy of outraged honour he paints, not of loving or broken hearts. Nowhere has he drawn the glad excess of love, or its deep agonies : he could not, perhaps—he who seems never to have felt either ; but the deep gloom of relentless justice, the stern iron nature, remorseless even to the suspicion of a crime—this was natural to the priest, to the ascetic monk, to the Grand Inquisitor familiar with torture, to the court chaplain who had listened to many a dread tale of domestic crime and tragedy at the confessional. He knew well the deadly temptations, the fierce passions incident to our nature, the secret

workings of sin in the frail heart ; he had watched the writhings of the human spirit in its agony; as of the human frame under torture, and there seems no place for pity for either in that gloomy religion of which he was the minister.

Nothing broken is beautiful save the heart, says the Persian proverb ; and as an artist he may have studied its phenomena through the stormy agonies of others ; and yet, thus perhaps the highest souls are best taught the story of our sad humanity. Omniscient, they read all life, gaze down into its gloomiest depths, while they themselves stand serene and immovable far above clouds and tempest. As a poet has said:—

Myriad hearts are pained and broken that one poet may be taught
To discern the shapes of passion, and describe them as he ought.

‘The Purgatory of St. Patrick’ belongs to quite a different order of drama from the foregoing. It may be classed amongst the religious plays, since its aim is to show how repentance and faith can purify from the greatest crimes.

The story is founded on a legend alluded to by many ancient chroniclers concerning a certain knight, Sir Owain, who, after leading a life of the most satanic crime, is converted by St. Patrick, and finally absolved after passing through the awful and supernatural terrors and tortures of St. Patrick’s Purgatory.

The scene is laid in our own beautiful Erin, where the pagan King Egerio reigns. A storm flings St. Patrick, along with the knight of the legend—called in the drama, Ludovico Enio—upon the coast. St. Patrick endeavours to convert the monarch, who, however, to show his scorn and disbelief of the apostle’s preaching, recklessly braves the unknown terrors of the Purgatory, enters the cave, and is seen no more. Ludovico relates his own history ; how he has passed his youth in Spain, ‘a prey to every wild desire,’ and as a sample of the crimes he committed, tells them—

To force a tender damsel to my wish,
I slew a noble, venerable man—

Her father. Nay, an honoured cavalier
I stabbed, through frenzied passion for his wife,
As he lay sleeping calmly by her side,
Bathing his dearest honour in his blood ;
Making his bed a fatal theatre,
And mingling there adultery and death.

I struck a serjeant, killed a captain,
And in my fury wounded several more.
I slew a bailiff—much too small amends
For all the other evils I had done.

Then he finds asylum in a convent, from whence he carried off a nun, who loves him, forgetting for a while his crimes—

Although were centred in her hapless person
The sealing of a cloister's sacred walls—
Violence, incest, ravishment, adultery,
Towards God himself, since she was vow'd His spouse.

But soon tired of her, he endeavours to repair his lost fortune by making a traffic of her beauty and honour. After this, finding himself universally shunned and hated, he embarks for Ireland, and would have perished in the shipwreck but for the blessed St. Patrick, 'who drew him from the poisonous wave.' This catalogue of demoniacal acts is given in order to make his subsequent purification by faith alone the more remarkable. But even after his miraculous rescue, he continues the same course of crime in Ireland. Polonia, the king's daughter, a fierce fiery maiden, who is engaged to Philip de Roqui, he seduces and carries off to the mountains, where he murders her that he may obtain possession of the jewels she fled with. St. Patrick raises her to life, as a proof of his divine mission ; and Polonia then appears afterwards in many wild and beautiful scenes, uttering inspired words of pleading for the Christian faith. Years pass by, and Ludovico, who has been wandering through distant lands, to try and stifle the reproaches of a guilty conscience, returns to Ireland. All is changed there ; the country has become Christian, and the sister of Polonia reigns as queen. Ludovico is still the slave of

all fierce passions, and his first resolve on returning is to murder Philip de Roqui, his rival with Polonia. For this purpose he watches Philip's house, crouched close beside it each night to stab him in the dark as he enters ; but for three nights successively, as he lies in wait, a muffled figure interposes between him and the intended victim, and Philip passes safe into his house. The next night he determines to attack this intrusive stranger, kill him first, and Philip afterwards. They meet ; Ludovico accosts him, draws his sword, but the sword only falls powerless on the empty air. ' Tell me, then,' he says—

Are you phantom, man, or demon ?
Are you silent ? Then 'tis needful
That your dark disguise I open.

He tears open the cloak, and discovers a skeleton:—

Mortal, know you not yourself [it exclaims] ?
Here behold your truest picture ;
I—am Ludovico Enio.

Ludovico falls to the ground, and when he recovers the inner change has been effected. The miracle of saving grace has begun, and he calls on Heaven to tell him some means of atonement for his past life.

[*Voices within, and music—*

The Purgatory !

Nothing in the whole course of dramatic representation equals this scene, with its fearful accessories, its solemn, awful meaning, its gloom, its terror, and its *truth* ; for it is the soul of Ludovico—that soul dead in sin, that sepulchre of all uncleanness, that here stands before him, made visible by the gaunt and ghastly image of corruption and death.

In the next scene, his uprisen murdered victim Polonia meets him, and strengthens his resolve to dare the Purgatory. The boat that conveys him across the lake to the dread cave is a coffin ; he enters it alone. The priests of the island and Polonia watch him till he disappears within the entrance, never

dreaming to behold him again in life. But he returns—the powers of hell are conquered ; and he reappears, a changed, repentant, and forgiven man, who is henceforth to lead a lonely life of penance and humiliation in the desert, apart from all the human race. — Then the priests command him in the name of God to tell of all he has seen. Upon which he relates his passage through all phases of this hell, with its demon tempters and supernatural tortures, where the unrepentant sinner writhes in eternal agony, till he reached a vast congregation—

Where, although 'twas plain they suffered,
Still they looked with joyous faces ;
Uttered no impatient accents,
But with moistened eyes, uplifted
Towards the heavens, appear'd imploring
Pity, and their sins lamenting.
This, in truth, was Purgatory.

The whole narrative is full of Dantescan imagery, and by itself a fine poem, though too prolonged, one would think, for the stage. The entire drama is, indeed, one of wild and singular beauty ; and passages of sublime and gorgeous poetry flash through it, that seem the product of some higher inspiration even than genius. Sometimes Mr. McCarthy's translation rises almost to the level of the original, but again falls so far below it, that one wishes for plain common prose, rather than such nondescript measure as he has adopted.

Amplification and dilution also, sometimes weaken the force of the original, or a crowd of supernumerary adjectives stifles its energy ; for instance, the speech of Enrique, page 300, vol. i. :—

And then the skies
Conspire *to darken and to fret*
My heart to-day. Before my eyes
I see my jealous thoughts arise,
With monstrous leer and giant size.
I see them here and so would fain
Fly from their looks, *so dark and drear.*

All the words in italics are interpolations.

Again, in the speech of Mencia (same page) we have :—

Be not driven by passion's *stormy sighs*.

Passion does not sigh. Calderon says simply :—

Be not driven by passion.

And in the conclusion of the same speech the English version gives :—

As to the lady, *Heaven above*
Alone can tell how strong the power
That forced her to forget thy flame :
O ! call her no unworthy name—
The fickle changeling of an hour.

Whereas the Spanish is charming in its brief pathetic music :—

Cuanto á la dama, quizá
 Fuerza, y no mudanza fué.
 Oidla vos.

(As to the lady, perhaps 'twas force, and not inconstancy. Hear her defence.)

Then in the description of the horse (p. 301) the same amplification occurs ; accumulation of epithets merely to eke out a rhyme. The Spanish description is simply :—

Broad flank and chest,
 Short head and neck,
 Strong foot and limb.

One more example to show how simple beauty is sacrificed to over-elaboration. On page 305, English version, Mencia says :—

'Tis thus with men, to-day they prize
 The thing to-morrow they may shun ;
 And what was joy to win, when won,
 Turns in their hearts to cold despair.

The original Spanish is so perfect in the form of expression, so mournful in the fall of the cadence, that the words at once strike the ear and imprint themselves on the memory :—

Oh, que tales sois los hombres !
Hoy olvido, ayer amor ;
Ayer gusto, y hoy rigor !

How exquisite are the two last lines even to the mere English ear, that can only comprehend the music, without the sense! Literally it runs :—

Oh, thus with all men 'tis the way !
Yesterday loved, forgotten to-day !
Yesterday rapture, and scorn to-day !

the form Mr. McCarthy has adopted requiring thirty words to express what in the original requires but half that number. This justifies the assertion, that Spanish metrical forms and music are not imitable in our language, and that all a translator can hope for, is to give the spirit of the original. If Mr. McCarthy, with all his high poetic gifts, has failed to render back the true Calderonic music, it is a proof, not of his want of power and genius, but simply of the impossibility of success. Yet to the student of high dramatic Spanish literature his volume will be found of incalculable value ; while the mere English reader will certainly gain from it a comprehensive idea of Calderon's varied dramatic power, and of his finest productions, such as never was before presented to the English public. 'Love after Death' is a drama full of excitement and beauty, of passion and power, of scenes where enthusiastic affection, self-devotion, and undying love are drawn with more intense colouring than we find in any other of Calderon's works. The plot is founded on a romantic incident of the time when the Moors of Granada rebelled, in 1568, and established themselves in the Alpujarra, under a king of their own race ; but enough has been said already, even in this brief sketch, to inspire the English reader with a desire to gain some idea, though it were only from a translation, of this great poet who has reigned in Spain without a rival for above two hundred years.

Shakspeare and Calderon, says Augustus Schlegel, are the only two poets entitled to be called great. Therefore it may

not be uninteresting to note the strong vital difference between them.

Shakspeare was in the fullest sense the poet of the Teutonic mind—the product of the highest mental freedom and self-assertion ; and therefore he draws strong definite individualities, not classes. Each character, as it were, asserts its own right to think and do according to the laws of its own inner nature. He adopts no conventional mode for kings, women, and lovers to think, speak, and act. Further, it is not the incident, but the evolution of character, that interests in Shakspeare. We do not weep for the victims—do not tremble for their fate, but watch with suspended breath the mental workings of the chief actors—the combat of the human with the unseen demon. This is, in fact, the real tragedy of life—not the incident of a life ; and this is why, long after we are familiar with the catastrophe in Shakspeare, we still read, and re-read, fascinated and absorbed, for the incident may never be repeated or paralleled in our own experience, but the combat of the mortal and the tempter is ever within and around us ; and ever according to our moods Shakspeare utters some true phrase—some startling revelation of the inner strife. Charles Lamb was even of opinion that Shakspeare was most powerful when not acted, but read in solitude by the still heart.

Let memory for an instant rest upon his finest plays and we find it is not the catastrophe that enchains the attention, but the secret workings of one human soul laid before us. Even in ‘Othello,’ where the tragedy is so deep and the victim so young and lovely, we think more of the unseen, intangible agonies of Othello’s mind, than of the visible agonies of Desdemona’s death. The mental torture affects more powerfully than the physical. The tragedy, to us, lies in the tortures of jealousy, not in the murder ; and therefore it is the unseen, not the scenic tableau, which rises first to memory when we recall his dramas.

Indeed there are no pictures in Shakspeare. What artist could represent the agony of Lear ; the fatal pride of Richard ; the strife between temptation and weakness in Macbeth ; the

wrecked Othello ; the fine poetical nature of Hamlet, forced into collision with the drear realities of life and sin ?

In Shakspeare, likewise, quite independent of either plot or individual character, we find more beautiful passages on abstract thoughts and qualities than can be met in any other poet of the world—passages that will be loved and quoted to the end of time, though the whole dramatic story connected with them sank into oblivion.

Now of Calderon exactly the reverse may be predicated. In not one speciality does he resemble Shakspeare, save that each have held paramount sway over their respective nations for above two centuries—

Kings by their own sufficing grace,
In the free realms of the spirit ;

the relation between Shakspeare and the free Teutonic mind being as complete and enduring as that between Calderon and the semi-Oriental, passive, passionate, Catholicised spirit of the southern.

Calderon is essentially a dramatist for the stage. In place of strong-defined individual characters, we have incident, fine situations, pictures—the most powerful series of dramatic pictures ever presented on the stage ; no poet ever imagined anything like them since Æschylus. He does not devote his genius, like Shakspeare, to analysis of feeling—the hidden thoughts of the soul, the *pensamientos escondidos del alma*, are not revealed by him. You know the soul of his creations only through acts, results. Sudden, swift, and fatal descends the tragic destiny. There is no apparent strife, no inner combat. We do not walk step by step along with the temptation, but irresistibly, as if by fatal necessity, the mortal falls beneath it, and we are summoned to look at once upon the crime and the revenge. For this reason none of Calderon's speeches are quotable for an abstract beauty independent of the plot, which is so strong a characteristic of Shakspeare's style. The interest in Calderon lies all within the story and its terrible catastrophe ; therefore, on mention of any of his

most powerful dramas, what rises soonest to the mind is not one great individual character standing out from all the others by reason of the grand proportions of the character itself ; neither is it any select passage of sublimity or tenderness, of depth of passion or height of lofty reasoning ; but memory draws back the curtain from some fearful well-remembered tragedy, at which we seem to have assisted with our own eyes, and the deep gloom of which can never pass from the imagination ; not the working out of an abstract passion, not the writhings of an individual mind, but some picture, terrible and startling as a torture-scene of the Inquisition, as awful in its tremendous meaning as a vision of the supernatural, just such as a powerful painter would throw upon canvas in his moods of highest inspiration.

Calderon loved painting ; he even wrote a treatise in praise of the art ; hence all his scenes are tableaux. What a gallery of beauty and terror might be formed from his works ! One may judge of this from even the few scenes noticed here. Think of Mencia's murder—the young life-blood ebbing drop by drop ; her low sobs of pleading innocence ; and the *husband* holding back the curtain, to watch that pity should not abridge one torture, nor revenge lose one throb, of her death agony. Then the scene between Ludovico and the skeleton. Here Shakspeare would have given a grand, deep soliloquy, in which the workings of the sin-steeped heart would have been laid bare to us ; but Calderon, by one bold stroke, presents the whole ghastly image to the sensuous organs. That foul, fierce heart itself is there before us, visible in all the vileness and loathsomeness, such as the leprosy of sin had made it, such as the Scripture metaphors reveal it—a grave of *dead men's bones*.

Another speciality of Calderon (not of his age) is morality. Not a line, not a phrase, not a word in his dramas need be cancelled by the most fastidious delicacy. Tirso de Molina, a contemporary, though an ecclesiastic, is an immoral and shameless writer ; he it was who wrote the original of all the Don Juans of the world—therefore the exceeding purity of Calderon is the more remarkable.

Still Spain never at all approached the grossness of the French and English contemporaneous drama, though in each country the highest minds were the purest. Shakspeare, Corneille, and Calderon—these men had nobler minds than their age, and therefore speak nobly. Shakspeare is indeed often unreadable ; he could not quite overcome the tendencies of his era. Yet, all other English dramatists of the century are as much beyond him in coarseness, as they are beneath him in genius. And before Corneille, the French stage was so coarse, that even a description of the plot would not now be tolerated.¹ But he and Calderon simultaneously effected a revolution in literature, overthrowing the exhibition of sensuality and licentiousness, and uttering, with grave, beautiful eloquence, noble and heroic thoughts ; while their lives moved on equably down the century, with the same calm majesty and beauty, the same reforming, purifying influence. Grossness and licentiousness fled back into the shades of night, from the pure light their genius radiated around them ; and, as if by special providence, their lives were prolonged beyond the ordinary term of human duration, that so their apostolate of high and lofty thought might be set as an example to a corrupt, sensualised people. They both beheld the opening of the seventeenth century, and almost witnessed its close ; and, in that long career, not one unworthy action stains their fame, not one unworthy word blots the page they left to the judgment and the praise of posterity. Well might Calderon, too, have exclaimed with the aged Corneille, at the close of his long, pure, memorable life : ‘I have finished my course—my destiny as a superior man is accomplished. Whatever I was capable of doing I have done ; the rank that I was worthy to attain I have attained. Nothing more remains for me to desire.’

Before concluding, a very interesting volume may be noticed, which appeared at the same time with Mr. McCarthy’s Spanish translations, ‘Six Dramas of Calderon, translated by Mr Fitzgerald.’ Amongst them are four of the most remarkable of Calderon’s plays—*The Mayor of Zalamea* ; *The Painter*

¹ Guizot’s *Life of Corneille*.

of his own *Dishonour*; *Three Judgments at a Blow*; and *Gil Perez, the Galician*—a strange, wild drama, of which a notorious robber is the hero. Unlike all other translators, Mr. Fitzgerald has at once abjured the attempt at imitation of Spanish metrical forms, and boldly given his versions a complete idiomatic English dress. He has certainly taken great liberties with the original—abridged speeches, tacked others together, lopped off all exuberances of ornament, when he could not give the ‘rainbow play of brilliant harmonies,’ which made the Spanish verse so exquisite, and turned all the lyricism at once into blank verse, but the result has been a most interesting volume for the English reader, natural in style and idiomatic in expression. In no other mode or form can the works of the great Spaniard become *popular*; and Mr. Fitzgerald deserves our thanks for having presented so excellent a model for future translators to emulate.

STELLA AND VANESSA

THE English writers of the eighteenth century are rapidly vanishing from our hearts and libraries ; even the best of them are only traditionally venerated, seldom read. The new generation never dreams of taking its inspiration from Pope, nor its philosophy from Paley, and even the great Dr. Johnson himself is mainly kept alive by the faithful love of poor Boswell. The mission of the eighteenth century was, in fact, action, not literature. It came into the world, as a French writer observes, to destroy, not to build up ; to clear away the old rags and cobwebs of prejudice and cant, and the last remnants of serfdom and feudalism, by such great deeds as American independence and French revolution. It was an age of questionings and doubt ; when, men mocked at everything they had once venerated, and denied everything, even God. ‘A torch and crowbar period,’ Carlyle calls it, ‘of quick rushing doom and conflagration, when the whole social system having fallen into rottenness, the natives took the questionable step of setting the whole thing on fire.’

The literature of such a period was, of necessity, sensuous and material, or vapidly didactic, for without earnest religious faith there can be neither sublimity nor elevation of sentiment ; yet even this eighteenth century, so shallow, false, and feeble in literature, produced, amidst ‘the men of the time,’ some representatives of the men of all time, destined to hold permanent rank in the grand federation of human intellect. Of these most were Irish. Swift, Goldsmith, and Burke still live and seem endowed with an irrepressible vitality, while

nearly all their fellow-workers are passing, or have passed, into chaos and oblivion. Yet Swift's individuality interests even more than his works : that wonderful career of a self-made man, who by the mere force of his intellect, wit, and irony made ministries tremble, as he hurled his terrible pamphlets like thunderbolts upon his scared and startled opponents, crushing them as much by the bitterness of his sarcasm as by the remorseless logic of truth, fact, and sound sense.

It is remarkable that Swift's genius was by no means developed early. His career in Trinity College was unmarked save by some records of his unruly and insubordinate temper. On his twenty-first birthday he had to beg pardon on bended knees of the outraged college authorities, a circumstance which made him hate his birthdays ever after, and even record them bitterly. When he went to London he was glad to earn a poor 20*l.* a year as literary drudge to Sir William Temple ; but here, in the great focus of ideas, a sense of his own deficiencies dawned upon him, and he began to study assiduously for eight hours a day. Still at twenty-seven he had produced nothing beyond a few translations from the classics, and had attained nothing beyond an Irish living of 100*l.* a year. Ten years more passed away, and though his great learning, his extraordinary wit, his conversation, and his sarcasms had gained him an immense social reputation, the slumbering giant within him had not fully awoke. In fact, Swift was nearly forty years of age before he blazed upon the world with all his tremendous powers, and England knew that she possessed one great writer more. For the ten subsequent years he reigned in London the autocrat of the ministry—the undisputed master of the political world—hated, feared, and caressed by the trembling slaves who, notwithstanding his arrogance, yet knew that without him they could have no existence whatever. This man, without rank or fortune or office, ruled them all by the terrible force of his mighty intellect ; yet he had in him also great and noble instincts, for without them no man can rule his fellow-men—a scorn of gain, an indomitable pride, and an invincible love of truth, right, and justice.

It was in Ireland, after he became Dean of St. Patrick's, that he wrote the famous satire, 'Gulliver's Travels'—the sharp sword of his wit never keener, though he was then near sixty years of age—this wonderful tale, that, in its literal meaning, has delighted the children of every generation for the last hundred and fifty years, and whose hidden wisdom will delight all sages, politicians, and thinkers to the end of time. Who knows what hints for this grand satire of political and official weakness and absurdities Swift may not have received from his residence in Ireland? and even the land where Gulliver reports he passed some time during his travels may still exist—a land where 'the bulk of the people consist, in a manner, wholly of discoverers, witnesses, informers, accusers, prosecutors, evidences, swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern instruments, all under the colours, the conduct, and the pay of Ministers of State and their deputies: the plots in that kingdom being usually the work of those persons who desire to raise their own characters of profound politicians, to restore new vigour to a crazy administration, or to stifle or divert general discontents.'

But what need to localise his pictures? The vices, frauds, follies, and meannesses he satirises are to be found everywhere and in all times. Were there not something common to all human nature in them, these profound satiric sketches would not have existed so long. He does more, however, than paint the degradation of man. He enforces the eternal principles of truth and justice, which formed the basis of his own mind, by the very poignancy of his satire against their opposites. In this strange book, indeed—this child's book, yet filled with the deepest philosophy—we seem, more than in any other of Swift's works, to stand face to face with the heart of the man—its tragic gloom and grotesque irony. Through the sarcasm of the fable we trace his noble love of freedom, his strong sense of human rights, and the dignity of intellect; his savage independence of spirit, his scorn and hatred of systems which left genius and true merit crushed under the feet of a corrupt oligarchy, and the indignant pride that made him recoil from

all wrong and injustice. He not only weighed his own age in the balance and fathomed its hollowness, but he looked before and after, and sat in judgment upon the whole life of humanity. A great prophet of our own day has said: 'Whoso belongs only to his own age, and reverences only its gilded popinjays or mumbo-jumbos, must needs die with it, though he were crowned seven times at the Capitol. The great man does in truth belong to his own age, but he belongs likewise to all ages, otherwise he is not great. What was transitory in him passes away, but the immortal part remains, the significance of which is inexhaustible.' It is this 'inexhaustible significance' of Swift's best thoughts that make them for ever worth re-interpreting in the new forms of a new age.

But, above all, the love-drama of Swift's life has helped to make his name immortal; and it is singular that a subject so full of romantic passion has never been selected as a theme by any of our native novelists. What tears would have fallen by Stella's monument in St. Patrick's aisle, or by the laurels which Vanessa planted, if some Shakspeare of our age had filled up the shadowy outline of this tragedy of fatality and despair, of which tradition only recites the fragments!

A Frenchman—M. de Wailly—attempted such a work in his romance entitled 'Stella and Vanessa,' but he failed to unravel the mystery of those suffering hearts, whose felicity and misery are so fatally intertwined that union or separation alike brings doom. The portraits also are coarse and distorted, drawn without any true spiritual insight. For instance, the handsome Swift—the poet, patriot, wit, statesman, the profound and subtle thinker, the brilliant, dazzling conversationalist, the leading genius of his country, and the most powerfully effective writer of the age—is presented to the reader's mind as only a coarse, selfish, somewhat brutal, thoroughly uninteresting, unlikable compound of egoism and morosity, blended with a few traits of surly benevolence, springing from the promptings of conscience more than the impulses of the heart. That Swift possessed a nature shadowed by some of this dark colouring, is true, certainly; but M. de

Wailly's portrait has no claim to be considered a likeness, when he has copied only the coarsest features, the harshest lines, the superficial roughness of the epidermis, and omitted all the glory that genius radiated over the faults and defects of Swift's singular and complex moral organisation.

In his sketches of the two heroines, destined to celebrity throughout all time, for their beauty, misfortunes, fatal rivalry, and mournful destiny, the author has been equally unfortunate. Vanessa, with her passionate devotion, and Stella, with her meek, sacrificing love, are drawn with as coarse a pencil and coloured with falser tints. Stella, whom Swift pronounced 'the most accomplished conversationist of either sex' he had ever met with, appears through the distorting prism of M. de Wailly's imagination as scarcely better than a silly, childish hoyden, without acquirements to adorn or intellect to acquire; while the proud, gifted, high-bred, poet-souled, beautiful Vanessa changes beneath his touch into a vulgar, provincial third-rate virago; not a Medea, that she might have been, but a Madge Wildfire, whose love is half fury, half madness; but M. de Wailly at least deserves some commendation for the industry with which he has accumulated materials and inwoven truth with fiction.

The incidents of the tale are all historical, but the synchronous grouping, though adapted to render the dramatic effect more striking, is too far opposed to our consciousness of the truth to make us victims of the illusion. From Swift's arrival at Laracor, to take possession of the vicarage, up to the death of Stella, the time occupied in the action of the novel exceeds scarcely a few months, and all the intermediate events of his life, with Vanessa's love and Stella's death, are crowded into that space, though they really extended over a period of thirty years.

Yet even the simple historic incidents have a power to arouse our sympathies and to lead us dreaming into the past, where those pale mute statues stand out in sad beauty by the grave of him they died for, like sculptured caryatides supporting his tomb.

Let us breathe life upon the still lips for a few moments, and, uncoiling the roll of years, stand face to face with them, as Dante by the wailing spirits of Hades, while they tell their tale.

It was in the year 1688, the year of the great Revolution, when he was just twenty-one years of age, that the gifted young Irishman, in whom a conscious genius lay struggling to be freed from the bonds of poverty and obscurity, went to England to seek his fortune, a pedestal, a position—for what is genius without one? By his mother's influence, he was received into Sir William Temple's house as tutor, clerk, secretary—in fact, general assistant to all the working brains of the establishment, from the learned baronet's down to those of little Esther Johnson, the housekeeper's daughter—then a pretty, delicate, bright-eyed child of six years old, and afterwards the 'Star' of his life, the world-renowned *Stella*. After a few years residence there, Swift took orders and a vicarage in Ireland. A fit of romantic generosity, however, made him resign this living of Kilroot, after having held it only a year, in favour of a poor curate, struggling against starvation, with a wife and children, on 40*l.* a year; and at eight-and-twenty Swift found himself once more trusting to the drifting current of chances for means and a position. Yet Sir William gladly received his brilliant secretary again, and Swift resumed his position at Moor Park, as chaplain, literary assistant to Sir William, and preceptor to Stella—now a gay, gifted, beautiful girl of fourteen. But the young clergyman was no Abelard or St. Preux; Ambition was his only idol then, and his feelings towards his fair pupil never seem to have warmed, at any period of his existence, beyond the tenderest paternal regard. He continued this life for four years, until Sir William's death, reading eight hours a day, studying classics, philosophy, and politics with his all-wise, all-accomplished host; and penning pamphlets, satires, poems, and sketches of future works, that gained present celebrity and the earnest of approaching fame.

Then a change came. His patron died.

Lord Berkeley held out hopes of patronage, which were ful-

filled by presenting him with the miserable little living of Laracor, in the county Meath, with only 100*l.* a year ; and Swift settled down in his obscure glebe. But a light was wanting to his drear solitude, and he writes to his friend Stella to come and settle in Ireland likewise. She obeys. Was it love led her ? We know not ; but before the year is out, Stella and her companion, Mrs. Dingley, are fixed in lodgings at Trim, close to their brilliant, cynical, selfish friend. How beautiful was Stella then ! just eighteen, a lovely, fascinating being (as he himself described her, years long after, writing on the midnight of the day she died), with hair blacker than a raven, every feature of her face perfection, and a gracefulness more than human in every movement, word, and action. Add to this external beauty an intellect of a high order, most richly cultivated.

Swift says of her, that he had never met any of her sex gifted with a better mind, or who had improved it more by reading and cultivation. She was versed in Greek and Latin story, spoke French perfectly, understood the Platonic and Epicurean philosophies, the nature of government, somewhat of physics and anatomy, was a perfect critic both in prose and verse, whose opinion any author might rely on, always the most brilliant in conversation, no matter who was by—combining judgment, good sense, vivacity, courage, and discretion in a most extraordinary degree.

Her mind was like a temple dedicated to the Muses : wit, poetry, learning, philosophy had each an altar there. No conversation more brilliant, no face more lovely, could be found in the London circles where she moved ; and yet she leaves all—the homage and the splendours of the great capital—to bury herself in the central solitudes of Ireland with one whom she could not even call a lover.

Years pass thus. Stella receives an offer of marriage from a Dr. Tisdall. She thinks of accepting it, perhaps to shield her name from the censure which Swift acknowledges shadowed it for some time, in consequence of her undefined position ; or did she wish to test the affection of him whom she now felt she

loved? This, too, is a mystery for us ; but Tisdall was discouraged in all possible ways by Swift, and finally rejected. Years still pass on. Stella has no more offers of marriage, for her friend is henceforth considered as her lover. Perhaps Swift felt a compensation was necessary for having selfishly used the light of her young life to illuminate his otherwise cheerless, solitary existence. She had become necessary to his happiness, though assuredly he never loved her with the love that Stella's dark eyes would have desired to read in his ; and there is every reason for believing that he at last entered into a vague engagement to make her his wife when his fortune was bettered and he obtained preferment.

Ten years passed thus, and Stella's youth was fading and her health failing ; but still she loved and hoped and trusted. Had Swift any real intention of keeping the terms of his engagement ? If he had, there is not a single line from his pen extant to prove it.

In the year 1710 his political friends came into power, and Swift hastened to England to assist them, and further his own advancement. During his three years' absence from Ireland he wrote the well-known 'Journal to Stella,' a record of each day of his life transmitted to her by post each night. For the first few months there is intense fondness displayed, but no word of love—not an allusion to their probable marriage throughout the whole three years' correspondence. He calls her 'dearest beloved,' tells her that 'her felicity is the great end of all he aims at,' with other generalisms, evidently in answer to some gentle pleading of hers for a definite hope or an assured promise.

Then the change comes. Poor Stella !

The words of love, faint as they were, grow fainter. She thinks, perhaps, it is from the whirl of political excitement in which he lives ; and truly there is nothing stranger in the history of that era than Swift's sudden elevation to importance as a political power. An obscure Irish clergyman, without wealth, rank, or station, becomes at once the grand object which all parties are eager to secure upon their side ; but he has splendid

talents, they know that ; also a tremendous power of satire and an unscrupulous energy in using it, they know that too ; and that no opponent can stand before the fierce, scathing, terrible shafts of his ridicule. Harley and Bolingbroke declare he is the only man in England they fear, and they succeed in winning him to their side. Harley, the Prime Minister, absolutely grovels to him for his support, and Bolingbroke, the Secretary, flatters and adulates with all his own exquisite eloquence. His poor lodgings at eight shillings a week, in London, are besieged by courtly visitants and invitations to the courtly set ; all the wits of London adore him or envy him ; all the duchesses are emulous of his notice ; he guides the councils at the palace and troubles the cabals of the courtiers. Talent, for once, has its triumphs : Genius tramples upon coronets ; and one exults to see how Swift's proud soul recoiled from yielding homage to mere rank, when God and nature had denied nobler gifts. He stood by his order, and made the haughty lords of Court sue to him for his notice, but never advanced a step to solicit theirs.

‘I treat them like dogs,’ he says, with that contemptuous scorn which had measured their feebleness by his own colossal strength.

He refused to become chaplain to Lord Oxford, then Prime Minister, and in a letter to Bolingbroke writes : ‘I would have you to know, Sir, that if the Queen gave you a dukedom and the Garter to-morrow, with the Treasury staff at the end of it, I'd regard you no more than if you were not worth a groat.’

This is the true Republican spirit that actuates Genius in all ages. Swift would not allow intellect even in another to descend a step from the height where God had placed it. When Lord Oxford desired that Parnell might be brought to him, as he wished his acquaintance, Swift replied : ‘A man of genius was above a lord ; therefore the Ministry must seek Parnell, not Parnell the Ministry.’ His arrogance even sometimes became insolence : he bids Harley take a message to the Secretary that he cannot dine with him unless he dine early ; and the Prime Minister of England takes the message.

Yet, with all this cold, cynical contempt for the men who feared and flattered him, and used his brains as the lever to lift them to power, he was capable of the warmest feelings of kindness and generosity, as a thousand anecdotes evince. Lord Peterborough tells of him 'he wanted to frame a new system, to govern the world by love.' Pope, whose melancholy, tender letters display an affection based upon the highest esteem, testifies warmly to his 'humanity, candour, charity, and sincerity.' He tried to secure a place for Steele, his political opponent; and advanced Berkeley, Parnell, and Gay. For him, Genius was of no party. Almost all the great men of the day were indebted to him in some way or other; while, at the same time, singularly enough, the position his own talents and services entitled him to expect was not conceded to him. Perhaps the Ministry thought that hope would retain his services to their cause better than success; or the Queen's ear was assailed by the calumnies of the Whigs, who called him libeller and atheist; bishoprics became vacant, and dull plodders were adorned with the mitre, but Swift's brow still remained uncrowned. No wonder the bitterness of disappointed ambition displays itself openly in his treatment of Ministers. Still his war of words continues unabated on their behalf. Pamphlets, satires, poems, shake the power of the enemy, and peace or war in Europe depends upon a few strokes of his pen. He edited a paper called 'The Examiner,' assisted by Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and Prior. Opposed to them were Addison, Burnet, Steele, Congreve, and others—men worth breaking a lance with—who, though political opponents, were yet on terms of social intimacy with Swift.

No age can show a more numerous list of distinguished names than were Swift's contemporaries, though none amongst them, perhaps, are worthy to be ranked with the high pontiffs of literature that graced an earlier century. His was a brilliant life then. The flattered idol of the highest society in London; the companion of the gay, dazzling wits, philosophers, essayists, poets, dramatists, and prosists, that were headed by Pope, Addison, Steele, Berkeley, Bolingbroke, Congreve, Gay, Parnell,

Prior, and others, whose fame illumined the century. But the brightest amongst them all has offended the Queen, it seems, by a satire on her favourite Duchess of Somerset, and is condemned to banishment in Ireland as Dean of St. Patrick's. Swift felt infinitely mortified that ministerial patronage conferred no more. All the fine ladies were in tears at his departure ; all his friends mourned. Leaving London seemed to them like quitting sunlight for a cavern. How would he live without its glories and its splendour ? An amusing letter from one of them, addressed to him in Ireland, shows the feeling with which they contemplated his exile :

‘ And now, methinks, I look down into that bog of usquebaugh, and hear you gnashing your teeth, and crying : “ Oh, what would I give now for a glass of that small beer I used to call sour, or a pinch of that snuff I used to say was the worst snuff in the world ! Oh, what would I give to have had a monitor warning me of the sword hanging by a packthread over my head, and crying, in a voice as loud as Southwell’s, *‘ Memento, doctor, quia Hibernus es, et in Hiberniam reverteris ! ’*

‘ You are now cast upon an inhospitable island ; no mathematical figures on the sand ; no *vestigia hominum* to be seen ; perhaps, at this very time, reduced to one single barrel of damaged biscuit and short allowance even of salt water. What’s to be done ? Another in your condition would look about ; perhaps he might find some potatoes, or yet an old piece of iron, and make a harpoon, and, if he found Higgon sleeping near the shore, strike him, and eat him.

‘ But this, I know, is too gross a pabulum for one who hitherto has lived on wit, and whose friends, God be thanked, design he should continue to do so, and on nothing else. Therefore, I would advise you to fall upon old Joan. Eat : do I live to bid thee ? Eat Addison ;¹ and when you have eat everybody else, eat my Lord-Lieutenant ; he is something lean—God help the while ; and though it will, for aught I know, be treason, there will be nobody left to hang you, unless you think

¹ Chief Secretary in Ireland at the time.

fit to do yourself that favour ; which, if you should, pray don't write me a word of it, because I should be very sorry to hear of any ill that should happen to you.'

But what was poor Stella doing during these long three years, while Swift's wit was blazing brighter than the diamonds of admiring duchesses and flashing recklessly through the ice of Court formalities and startling the soul of the poor dull Queen ?

Was she weeping in loneliness by the willows of Laracor while her lover was basking in the eyes of a rival ? And such a rival ! Alas ! poor Stella, thou hast cause to weep !

But Stella did not even know she had a rival. The daily journal from Swift had certainly become colder and chiller, and it is evident that she had even complained a little of his protracted absence and evident disinclination to return to Ireland ; while, all the time, no professions of affection came to calm her solicitude. If want of fortune had prevented their marriage, Swift was now rich. The deanery was worth 700*l.* a year ; but no allusion is made to such a result—no expression of joy uttered at the prospect of their meeting ; on the contrary, a scarcely concealed chagrin is visible in every line, though without apparent cause ; and, as if to chill any rising hope within her bosom, repeated hints are given that he will be no richer for his *préferment*. Stella, however, never dreams of a rival. What woman ever thinks it possible that her lover can forget her ? If he is less ardent than her heart could wish, she blames ambition, not love, as the enchantress that detains him from her side. How could she be suspicious of brighter influences than her own retaining him, or that hers had ceased to attract ? for, though Swift had been on terms of the greatest intimacy with the Vanhomrigh family from the time of his arrival in London, yet no mention whatever is made in the journal of the all too fascinating Esther Vanhomrigh. His conscience told him how quickly and truly Stella's instincts, if he had but trusted himself to speak of her, would have recognised a rival in the superb 'Vanessa.' Let us, then, wake her from the marble where she sleeps, and sketch her portrait in all the fascination of youth and beauty.

Esther Vanhomrigh was scarcely more than twenty when Swift first met her moving, a radiant star, in the brilliant London circles. Rich, beautiful, and gifted with the fatal dower of genius—that acanthus-wreath for the brow of a woman which so often leaves it bleeding—was it wonderful that she dazzled and bewildered a man of intellect and ambition, who found himself the selected object of her love? Younger, too, by eight or ten years, than Stella—a Venus Victrix, equalling in beauty, and triumphing by rank and fortune over the low-born girl, whose station in society was acquired by chance, and retained only by those transcendent merits which could compensate for the obscurity of her birth, and the dubious nature of her position; yet Swift, whether from a principle of honour, or a deficiency of passion in his nature, seems long to have struggled against Vanessa's fatal fascination. A proud, scornful, sarcastic spirit like his is rarely a loving spirit. Ambition was the ruling passion of his life—not from selfishness or vanity, but from the strong consciousness of power within fitted to rule and reign amongst those who surrounded him. He loved appreciation. He rejoiced at being the centre and object of all homage; but he himself gave back no sympathies. His aim was to be a potent spirit, guiding men and ministers, and the love of woman was only a graceful luxury for his idle hours, delightful to enjoy so long as he was not called upon to make any sacrifice to retain it. It is a truth, however, of all natures gifted with genius, that they are the least capable of constant, concentrated love. They live in the Infinite; in lofty purposes and grand deeds, of which humanity at large is the object. They can throw their hearts into a cause, but not yield it to an individual. What isolated human heart is vast enough to absorb their affections or satisfy their aspirations?

Souls like theirs cannot have free action within so limited an horizon. What they call love is a sublime adoration for an idol robed in the fleeting colours of the imagination; but the delusion cannot last, and the society of minds inferior to their own often becomes in the end either wearisome or disgusting.

Fits of passion they may have, but enduring love seems almost an impossibility to genius—unless, indeed, Plato's dream were realised, and each great soul met and blended with its eternal antitype here on earth, as they may in heaven. But Swift must have been singularly passionless if a being gifted like Vanessa failed to draw down his soul from abstractions and shrine it in a human heart. In her he may have recognised at last the one that could inspire as well as sympathise—the full completion of his own nature—the ideal of his aspirations, though between them there was a great gulf fixed; for, since the gates closed of Paradise, when did Fate ever permit the union of these eternally related souls? Never. If each found its correlative on earth, Paradise would be no longer barred.

Between Swift and Vanessa rose up a separating form, strong in the sanctity of promises, beautiful, too, and gifted and loving, clinging to her cold, incomprehensible lover, as the ivy to the oak, with such helpless confidence that he knew if he rent away the tendrils she must die; but tenderness only, not the excitement of love, was in his heart. This is evident from his verses years long after:—

Thou, Stella, wert no longer young
When first for thee my harp was strung,
Without one wound of Cupid's darts,
Of killing eyes, or bleeding hearts;
With *friendship and esteem possessed*,
I ne'er admitted love a guest.

She had grown up with him, like a daughter, from her very childhood, and feelings that have once crystallised into fondness in the days of 'long ago' seldom change afterwards into love. Ten years of her beautiful womanhood had bloomed and faded away beside him without exciting a glow beyond the mild Platonism of tender interest; and if he ever formed an engagement of marriage with her it was merely because he could not otherwise have felt secure of preserving her society—a charm that had now become indispensable to his lonely Irish resi-

dence. But it was an engagement he might protract indefinitely ; for Stella had no means of resistance but complaints—the worst exorcism for a lover. Yet the happiness of all her life was staked on this marriage. Without it she had neither name nor rank nor honourable station. She had given up country and home and relatives to accept him for her destiny, and a woman can be placed in no falser position than when she has thus yielded up her independence, and claims the hand of her lover as a compensation for sacrifices, in place of conferring her love freely as a favour long sought, eagerly coveted, to be recompensed by the devotion of his life. ‘Keep free as an Arab of thy beloved’ is the truest counsel to a woman. Men—indeed, all mortals—have a tendency to value only what seems the unattainable ; but calmness, security, custom, above all, a conscientious sense of duty mingling with the feelings, are all fatal to love.

It was an influence more serene and lasting than love that attracted Swift towards his gentle companion. Accustomed to the turbid commotion of party politics, half a misanthrope from disappointed ambition, Stella, in the midst of his unquiet life, was the one pure feeling, the one untroubled holy thought where he found calm and repose. Her transparent soul mirrored his own, and blended in harmonic sympathy with all he hoped and suffered. She soothed his vexed, perturbed mind, like the inspired music that quelled the evil spirit in the breast of Saul, though, like the frantic monarch of Israel, he himself flung the javelin to pierce the heart of the player. Stella’s love for him, too, was the result of circumstance rather than the sudden up-springing impulse of ecstasy and adoration when the heart recognises ‘the ever longed for.’ It was only when the dream of years was troubled by a rival that she felt the whole happiness of life, her very life itself, was staked upon its continuance.

Vanessa’s, on the contrary, was a voluntary consecration ; the willing immolation of her youth, fame and fortune at the shrine of her lover ; a feeling raging with the tumultuary fever of passion ; a worship that, in a nature so impassioned as

hers, became idolatry. It was the love of a woman of genius for her equal, and no passion equals it in intensity—none have proved so fatal in their consequences. Swift would have been more or less than man could he have been insensible to the glorious gifts she flung so lavishly before him or the passionate fire that burned in her words. True, he tried to reason with her—to calm her; but the very consciousness that he *dare* not trust himself to love her was an excitement to fan the flame. ‘They never loved who never have loved wrongly.’ There was danger in his intercourse with Vanessa, but the danger made it delirium. He was her companion and instructor. They read and wrote together, dreaming away the hours in a Paradise-world of intellectual communion. The teacher was forty-four, the pupil but half his age; yet the first betrayal of love fell from her lips. Swift’s surprise and emotion at the confession are portrayed in his poem of ‘Cadenus and Vanessa,’ where he relates the rise and progress of her fatal love—not with any expressions of corresponding fervour certainly, but with an evident pride and pleasure that showed how he loved to linger over the seductive picture.

In the paganised cant of the day, he commences by describing how Venus conferred all beauty and Pallas all wisdom on the maiden; how the latter gift made the follies of society intolerable to her; till at length, yielding herself up to the attractions of mind, she turns from them all to enjoy the converse of her tutor, Cadenus; but love mingles with the literature. Vanessa ‘owns the wandering of her thoughts,’ and tells him:—

‘I knew by what you said and writ
How dangerous were men of wit;
You cautioned me against their charms,
But never gave me equal arms.
Your lessons found the weakest part—
Aim’d at the head, but reach’d the heart.’

‘Cadenus felt within him rise
Shame, disappointment, guilt, surprise,
Hardly, at length, he silence broke,
And faltered every word he spoke.’

But Vanessa refutes all his objections, and claims the right to love him, even from his own teachings :—

‘How was her tutor wont to praise
The geniuses of ancient days;
Suppose Cadenus flourished then,
He must adore such godlike men.’

‘And this she takes to be her case;
Cadenus answers every end—
The book, the author, and the friend.
The utmost her desires can reach,
Is but to learn what he can teach,
While every passion of her mind
In him is centred and confined.’

‘Cadenus, to his grief and shame,
Could scarce oppose Vanessa’s flame,
And, though her arguments were strong,
At least could hardly wish them wrong.’

The concluding verses leave the world in doubt as to whether the pleading maiden subdued the scruples of her lover, who hitherto had offered to her only friendship in return for so much love :—

But what success Vanessa met,
Is to the world a secret yet—
Whether he at last descends
To act with less seraphic ends,
Or, to compound the business, whether
They temper books and love together,
Must never to the world be told,
Nor shall the conscious muse unfold.

Notwithstanding the frigid, artificial framework of this poem, there is love evident in it; as genuine love, probably, as Swift could feel; flattered vanity at least, which forms half the love of all men. But, whatever were the elements, there is more of the sentiment—a thousand times more—than can be found in all the odes addressed to Stella.

In Vanessa’s lines to him, however, there is no mistaking the deep earnestness of true passion. How beautiful are

these, after contrasting the brightness of spring with the gloom of the heart when he had left her!—

Yet why should I thy presence hail,
As when Cadenus blest the scene,
And shared with me those joys serene ?
When, unperceived, the lambent fire
Of Friendship kindled new desire ;
Still listening to his tuneful tongue,
The truths which Angels might have sung
Divine imprest their gentle sway,
And sweetly stole my soul away.
My guide, instructor, lover, friend—
Dear names ! in one Idea blend.
Oh ! still conjoined, your incense rise,
And waft sweet odours to the skies.

But now he is returning to the patient, weary-waiting Stella with love on his lip and treason in his heart. Vanessa, no doubt, expects him back to claim her hand when his Irish affairs are settled, and Stella is lingering for the fulfilment of the promises of thirteen years.

Hoping hearts, could ye but look into futurity !

Swift's first letter to Vanessa on his return to Ireland is steeped in melancholy. 'I thought I should have died of discontent (he says) at my first coming. I hate the thought of Dublin.' Alas for Stella !

A few weeks found him in London once more. Ministers could not exist without him, and he remained there till the following year (1714), when the Queen died. This event, which marred all his hopes of preferment, affected him deeply. He returned to Dublin, and never visited England again for twelve years.

At this very time Vanessa, by the death of her father and brother, succeeded to a small estate in Ireland. She was now independent in fortune, uncontrolled in action, and she resolved to follow her lover to Ireland and take up her residence beside him. Swift's alarm at such a measure was expressed in a letter warning her to be cautious. He says :

‘I can see you very seldom in Ireland—it is not a place for freedom—leave all to fate—perhaps we may meet in London in the winter.’

But Vanessa knows no necessity for caution. She was proud of her lover—proud to confess her love. ‘By all the holy angels,’ exclaims Goethe, ‘by all the images of blessedness which a pure and kindly heart creates, there is not anything more heavenly than the soul of a woman that gives herself to the man she loves!’

She had no reason to blush for her devotion. But the triumph of conquest was enough for him. He fears the clashing claims of Cleopatra and Octavia; the terrible strife of loving, jealous, breaking hearts. Men have no objection to be loved, but they dread a scene. If women will break their hearts, let it at least be in silence; that is all they demand from the victims in return for the passing dream of love with which they may have favoured them.

Undismayed, however, and undeterred by her lover's objections, Vanessa arrives in Dublin, and the dread shadow falls at last upon Stella's destiny which Swift had so long vainly tried to avert. Rumours reach her of love in which she has no part. Jealousies and agonies rend her soul. How touching are these plaintive lines of hers on ‘Jealousy,’ every word of which seems written with tears:—

Shield me from his rage, celestial Powers !
This Tyrant who embitters all my hours.
Ah, love ! you've poorly played the hero's part !
You conquered, but you can't defend, my heart.
When first I bent beneath your gentle reign,
I thought this monster banished from your train ;
But you would raise him to support your throne,
And now he claims your empire as his own ;
Or—tell me, tyrants—have you both agreed
That where one reigns, the other shall succeed ?

And what tender devotion in the verses on Swift's birth day, where she addresses him as her ‘early and her only guide,’ and concludes:—

Late dying, may you cast a shred
Of your rich mantle o'er my head ;
To bear with dignity my sorrow,
One day alone—then die the morrow.

Meanwhile, Vanessa, unconscious that a breaking heart lay between her and happiness, mourns over the reserve of her lover, which he calls 'discretion,' and writes to him after her arrival in Dublin :—

'Pray what can be wrong in seeing and advising an unhappy young woman ?—you cannot but know that your frowns make my life insupportable. You have taught me to distinguish, and then you leave me miserable.'

And in another letter suspense seems rising to torture ; a thick, stifling darkness of suspicion and despair is gathering round her life like a pall, and these are not words but cries of agony wrung from a crushed heart :—

'It is impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last. I could have borne the rack better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more, but the resolves, to your misfortune, did not last long.—I must beg you to see me, and speak kindly to me, for I am sure you would not condemn any one to suffer what I have done, could you but know it.—When I complain, then you are angry ; and there is something awful in your looks that strikes me dumb. Oh ! that you may have so much regard left that this complaint may touch your soul with pity. Did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you to forgive me. I cannot help telling you this, and live.'

Was misery ever more eloquent ? Could the deep prostration of love be more complete ? No heart could have remained insensible to such passionate pleadings. Swift must have loved her ; and love, fatal love, alone could have prevented him from following the course which honour dictated—that of revealing to her the bonds which bound him to another, the bar which separated their destinies for ever.

Still in the bright, dazzling prime of youth, Vanessa might have found another kindred spirit on whom to lavish all the glowing love of her nature ; but Swift had not courage to utter the word that parted ; nor yet could he resolve to break utterly that patient, trusting, long-suffering heart which had gently twined itself with every fibre of his being. The pale, fading form of Stella was there beside him, clinging by one frail cord of love to the wreck of her existence ; could he snap it asunder, and let her die ? Death was already hovering around her ; there was but one word could rescue her from the grave, and Swift at last pronounced it. In 1716, two years after Vanessa's arrival in Ireland, at midnight, in the garden of the Deanery, that strange marriage ceremony was performed which made the misery of two persons irreparable, without insuring the happiness even of one. Swift bound himself by law to one woman, while he was bound by love to another ; Stella's position in society was not ameliorated, as her marriage with the Dean was to be kept a profound secret. She had the name of wife without the honours or the happiness, for she returned to her lodgings after the ceremony, and lived apart from her nominal husband the same as before ; but poor Vanessa's fate was sealed. Stella no longer could fear her rival, and it was to procure her this satisfaction that Swift had consented to their joyless and ill-omened marriage.

He evidently grew tenderer to Stella as her health declined, and it was about this time he began to address those birthday odes to her which have made her name illustrious, but through which no trace of passion is discoverable. Praise, esteem, friendship, gratitude, appreciation of her talents are all warmly expressed—everything, in short, that a woman cares least to hear from the man whom she adores when her heart is pining for the one word—love.

Meanwhile, Vanessa had retired to Marley Abbey, her residence, near Celbridge. There Swift visited her ; and hours of rapture to poor Vanessa were passed by his side, while she little thought that he had already sacrificed her to appease the

jealousy of another. She lived with her sister, avoiding all the gaieties suited to her age, though her society was eagerly courted by the gentry round. Offers of marriage were made to her ; she rejected them all. The neighbours thought her sad ; she never was seen to smile, except when the Dean visited her, and then she seemed happy. After each visit she planted a laurel with her own hands beside the romantic bower where she received him.

It was shadowed by trees, the Liffey glanced brightly in the distance, and a murmuring cascade fell in music beside them. There they sat, and talked, and read for hours together. The garden can still be traced, and a few laurels yet mark the spot consecrated as 'Vanessa's bower.' What a fanaticism of feeling was hers—what poetry and passion blended in one lovely, loving soul !

But a visible change came over the manner of her lover after the ceremonial marriage with Stella. Vanessa's letters, which poured burning from the heart, are answered by Swift with a cold deadly levity, as if his object had been to kill passion by scorn and force her to break with him and leave Ireland for ever. He seemed to live in perpetual terror of discovery. He tells her not to write his name, but express it by a dash, lest her letters be opened, and speaks of the confusion he was in when a note from her was handed to him before company. Perhaps, at last, he felt real pity for her position, and affected coldness to cure her of a passion as fatal as it was intense. Honour, it may be, was triumphing over feeling, but the honour was now more cruel even than the love. Her lover had become a religion to Vanessa ; he stood between her and the universe—even between her and God.

The love of woman never imagined anything more deeply tender, more agonising in their eloquence, than the last recorded letters of hers. There is the tragic gloom of Schiller with the wild passion of Rousseau. In one she says :—

'I must either unload my heart, and tell you all its griefs, or sink under the inexpressible distress I suffer by your neglect. It is now ten long weeks since I saw you, and in all

that time I have never received but one letter. Oh ! have you forgot me ? You endeavour by severities to force me from you, but I here declare that it is not in the power of art, time or accident to lessen the inexpressible passion which I feel. Put my passion under the utmost restraint ; send me as distant from you as the earth will allow ; yet you cannot banish those charming ideas which will ever stay by me while I have memory. Nor is the love I bear you only seated in my soul ; for there is not a single atom of my frame that is not blended with it. Therefore do not flatter yourself that separation will ever change my sentiments ; for I find myself unquiet in the midst of silence, and my heart is at once pierced with sorrow and love. For Heaven's sake, tell me what has caused this prodigious change in you of late. If you have the least remains of pity for me left, tell it me tenderly. No—do not tell it so, that it may cause my present death, and do not suffer me to lead a life like a languishing death, which is my only life if you have lost your tenderness for me.'

And there is another, in which the wild and thrilling incantations of a love 'vast as night or heaven' make one tremble when we think the agonies of the mind were real that dictated them. It is written four years after Swift's marriage, still a concealed fact from her ; but she felt there was a change, and all the hopes of her young life seem finally to have fallen, like pale autumn leaves, to earth, and left her heart bare and desolate. Can we not fancy her, with her mournful eyes, her Corinna brow, and her lips tremulous with emotion, as she writes :—

'Tell me sincerely if you have once wished with earnestness to see me since I wrote to you. Solitude is insupportable to a mind which is not easy. I have worn out my days in sighing, and my nights with watching and thinking of you. Oh ! that I could hope to see you here, or that I could go to you ! Can you deny me in my misery this only comfort ? I was born with violent passions, which terminate all in one—the inexpressible passion I have for you. Consider the killing emotions I feel from your neglect, and show some tenderness, or I shall

lose my senses. I firmly believe you have often wished me religious, hoping then I should have paid my devotions to heaven ; but that would not spare you, for were I an enthusiast, still you would be the deity I should worship. What marks are there of a deity but what you are known by ? You are present everywhere. Your dear image is always before my eyes. Is it not more reasonable to admire a radiant form one has seen than one only described ?'

Two years more pass in this terrible conflict between hope, fear, love, jealousy and suspicion. Swift tries to prevail on her to leave Ireland, to seek distraction in company and exercise. 'Get yourself a horse,' he says, 'and have always two servants to attend you, and visit your neighbours. There is a pleasure in being revered, and that is always in your power, for your superiority of sense and easy fortune. I long to see you in figure and equipage.' There are some traces of melancholy, if not misery, too, in his letters now. One is glad of it. That he suffered was at least some compensation to Vanessa ; but the catastrophe is approaching. Twelve years had passed since her first meeting with Swift—a twelve years' feverish dream of love. From the grave of buried youth and hope comes up at last the supreme cry of an agonised soul, seeking certainty in some shape—death or happiness. Holiest martyrs at the stake with heaven sustaining might have endured equal tortures, but could not have endured them longer.

She writes to Stella, and asks the fatal question :

Was she indeed married to Swift ?

Stella answers in the affirmative.

No hope now—no more sunlight on her life. Nothing but a black fatality of doom. The saddest, gloomiest bar that God ever placed between a heart and happiness rose before her, beyond which no hope gleams but from across the grave of another.

Married ! That word killed her.

The following day Swift rode down to Vanessa's residence, entered the room where she was seated, mourning her fate, flung her letter to Stella upon the table without a word, then

quitted the house in a tempest of rage, and never again beheld Vanessa in life. A violent fever that followed this scene soon put a period to the sad existence of the unhappy Vanessa ; the troubled dream of life was over—the beautiful form laid within the grave ; the noble heart stilled for ever, and the passionate soul gone forth to mingle with the harmonies of the universe and with the seraphs before the Throne. Yet, better so to die than to have lived unloving and unloved.

But misery came to other hearts also, though it did not kill so speedily.

Stella's suspicions were confirmed. What was the name of wife to her without the love that makes it blessed, and a rival had claimed her holiest right ! Filled with indignation and overwhelmed by grief, she quitted Dublin without seeing Swift, and they did not meet again for months ; while upon him whose love had been so fatal fell a gloom which twenty succeeding years of a life brightened by as much glory, homage, worship and adoration as ever fell to the lot of an Irishman in Ireland could not dissipate ; and thereof ' came in the end despondency and madness.'

Stella's health and heart were broken, but she lingered on for five years. Her whole life had been one of patient suffering. She was accustomed to it ; still her spirit yearned for one consolation before she died—the public acknowledgment of her marriage. This was denied her. Swift was in London at the beginning of her last illness, and, from his letters, seemed anxious to remain there till all was over ; but business obliged him to return, and, as he stood by Stella's deathbed, she made a last earnest appeal to his justice, adjuring him by their friendship to acknowledge her as his wife. Swift made no reply, but, turning on his heel, walked out of the room, nor ever saw her afterwards during the few days she lived. The veracity of this account has been impugned ; but, in any case, who can doubt the agonies of Stella, for she died without the request being granted !

A hundred years and more have passed since death stilled the hearts of the rivals and the victims. The triumphs of

Marlborough are forgotten ; the pedants of the age have disappeared from our memories and our libraries ; the great statesmen who fretted their busy hour upon the stage of life have sunk into the gulf of nothingness—but the pale, beautiful, shadowy forms of Stella and Vanessa are still beside us, even as they passed from this life weeping. Over the records of true feeling time has no influence ; hearts of the present and future still vibrate with the hearts of the past, and the love that kills can at least rear an enduring cenotaph. So they stand for ever in the Valhalla of humanity, with Eloise and Juliet, crowned with the immortality of genius, love, and suffering ; imploring sympathy with their soft mute eyes, and waking fresh tears from each successive generation as their sad, passion-inspired words glide across the centuries like the low tones of distant music ; for the tragedies that make us weep are not of fallen empires, but of the workings of human passion in a wrecked human heart. In such alone we feel the kinship of all natures ; the mournful history seems a page torn from our own heart ; the woe, the agonies, the doom that ever follow true love as certainly as death follows life are phases of emotion and suffering we, too, have passed through, and our tears fall from pity for ourselves as much as for the sorrows of another.

What a tragedy, if one but thinks of it, and what a mystery ! Why were these three hearts led to love, and then love made their misery ? Was Swift in fault if, seeing Vanessa, he should adore her ? or what law of God or man did she violate by giving her heart to him ? Yet she is unconsciously made the cloud to shadow the pure and perfect life of Stella—the cruel instrument to rob her of her only blessing. Love is involuntary, yet Swift must expiate it, as if it were a crime, by sacrificing himself and Vanessa to a marriage without love. Two hearts, two lives were in his keeping ; happiness for one was death to the other. Was it his fault ? He tried to preserve both, and the end is despair and madness. Yet one cannot stop in any portion of the story and say, ‘ Here there is sin.’ It is like one of the old Greek tragedies, in which the Fates

and Furies guide the threads of life, and mortals, feeble mortals, strive in vain against an iron-handed destiny, and yet it is no more than a drama of daily life. Two more female hearts are added to the pile laid upon the altar of unhappy love. Is it so strange a fate? Is not love ever the sole tragedy of a woman's destiny? Are there not other women who have passed from amongst us, with the crowned brow of genius, who, Sappho-like, freed themselves at once from life and a fatal love by a voluntary death—women who have made the worship of genius their religion and expiated the idolatry? Stella and Vanessa at least have won a glory to gild the gloom of fate denied to many; for the name of their lover is a catafalque whereon they lie in state for the tender sorrow of all ages, with the asbestos torch of his genius illuminating the bier.

At last Swift's proud spirit seems to have been broken by sorrow and remorse, and a gloom fell upon his life that never more was lifted.

His health declined, his intellect became clouded, the power of writing went from him, but the bitterest pang of all was his own consciousness that madness was approaching, and that all the fine chords of his brain were jangled and out of tune. For three years he never spoke though he still seemed conscious of passing events, even down to the time of his death, which took place in 1745, just fifteen years after Stella had been laid in her grave.

MISS MARTINEAU

WOMAN's intellect, keen, brilliant, and fearless, is rapidly permeating all departments of literature, and making its influence felt upon the mind of the age ; an influence which is now mainly exerted in overthrowing old prejudices and conventionalisms, and those venerable social fictions which have long held women in bondage. Clever, typical members of the sex, no longer to be called the weaker, lecture to lawgivers, orate from the platform, edit magazines, flash through the serials, and have even gat them up into high places, and utter sibylline oracles from the tripod of the Quarterlies and the solemn adytums of the sacrificial reviews. A woman's pen discoursing upon social subjects in the fluent, facile, woman's way has made the fortune of the 'Saturday,' and given it a celebrity which all the pseudo-Johnsonian-spread-eagleism of its political style, as an American critic describes it, never could have achieved. And women have even enthroned themselves on the judgment-seat. One of the cleverest female intellects of the age, Harriet Martineau, but recently passed from amongst us, has in her work entitled 'Literary Celebrities' passed sentence upon her century with lips as cold and eye as stern as an un-pitying Rhadamanthus, weighing souls in the balance and, alas ! finding many of them wanting.

Miss Martineau states in her preface that she was for years on the staff of the 'Daily News,' during which time she contributed to it all those biographies of illustrious and departed intellects afterwards collected into a volume. From the freedom and power of these brilliant sketches, so independent, so

fearless, so sarcastic and severe, the world, no doubt, imbibed them with reverential faith as the product of the strong, masculine mind ; but, lo ! all this time it had sat at the feet of a woman to learn wisdom. A Deborah judged Israel. It is no strong, hirsute Esau that here brings us in his prey, palpitating and sanguineous from the hunting-grounds of literature, but a woman who gives us butter in a lordly dish ; though, like Jael, she can slay while she nourishes, and has driven a nail into the brow of many a poor fleeting wanderer that lay down trustingly in her tent. Miss Martineau's judgments are indeed for the most part cruel, scathing, and remorseless. Sisera's mother would have hardly recognised her son if the hammer of Jael were as heavy as that of the modern prophetess. Still, the biographies are worth preserving. They comprise those of statesmen, generals, poets, authors, and men and women of letters who have been famous in the world's sight for the last fifty years ; some of whom are certainly destined to immortality, but others would soon fade and fall from our memories, and go down as dust to dust, were it not for the Egyptian spices of wit and sarcasm in which Miss Martineau has embalmed their faults and follies. Yet it must be a sad thing after all, to build the tomb and write the epitaph for one's own generation : to stand by, like the Angel of Fate, to judge each passing soul as it shivers on the brink of the fatal river, going sadly from its life-work to the grave : to watch the vast stream of life flowing beside us, coming whence we know not, going whither we know not, except that we see it fall into a gulf of silent mystery, within whose depths we know that we too must soon sink and disappear. And Miss Martineau, as she wrote the long death-roll of her literary co-workers, contemporaries, and friends, must have often realised the sadness and truth of Jean Paul Richter's words, ' As we go on in life we find that the graves of our friends are the steps by which we descend to our own.' But proximity and contact seem to have generated no tenderness in her heart : she disdains to follow the beautiful illusions of the affections. Besides, praise is a vapid thing, stupid and commonplace. Every eye can detect the grains of

gold, but it is only the philosopher can prove to us how much dross the ore contains. This stern work of analysis the keen and clever authoress resolutely undertook, with no feeble, feminine shrinking of the nerves. Even when she praises it is with a cold and grudging reticence, as if she scorned her spirit that could be moved to praise up anything. Her style, also, is eminently terse and epigrammatic. Praise, which always has a tendency to weak diffuseness, would not suit it; therefore she is sparing of the holy, consecrating oil, and, even if she does anoint the head, by no means allows any to run down the beard, much less to reach the skirts of the clothing.

People generally, it is said, hate their contemporaries: Horace Walpole certainly hated most of his, and despised the rest—kings, queens, statesmen, authors, actors, and, especially, his own particular friends. We stand too near the intellects of our age for Hero-worship; and if we are thrown into too close communion with them, their faults often irritate our daily life more than their genius sanctifies it. The faults of the gifted, also, are often constant, glaring, and aggravating, while their genius is only manifested, or best manifested, in those sublime exceptional moments when a great purpose or a noble thought fills the soul, and all the petty people and the petty cares of the world are forgotten or overlooked as if they no longer existed.

Besides, it is a law of nature that repulsion is generated by proximity; and attraction ceases and centrifugal force begins to act when souls, like molecules, are brought into a condition of too close contact. Therefore Emerson wisely preaches to society the doctrine of insulation. 'Let us not,' he says, 'be too much acquainted. We should meet each morning as if from foreign countries, and depart at night as into foreign countries. In all things I would have the Island of a man's life inviolate.' Carlyle, also, recommends that we should 'study the art of weaving a cloak of darkness, politely impregnable to human curiosity.' We should, in fact, each one of us, live apart like kings; guarded by deference and majesty

not only from the prying intrusiveness of society, but even from too familiar intercourse with our nearest friends.

Miss Martineau's judgments bear the stamp of this fatal proximity which tends so much to lessen reverence. She lived too near most of the celebrities she depicts, and examined them quite at her ease through the smoked glass of daily life which deadens all their radiance. To those at a distance these bright planets look glittering and beautiful, but to her who stands besides them they are but dull, common earth, no better than our own. Yet we cannot accept her analysis as final and exhaustive, for, as a great thinker has said, 'there is somewhat spherulic and infinite in every man, especially in every genius, which sports with and spurns our limitations.' Human nature is a mystic duality, half animal, half angel; a worm, a God; and the contrast and strife between the two natures is never so marked as in the gifted. At times we may see genius falling below the level of the human, a prey to mere instincts; then, suddenly reasserting its divinity, it tramples on the low influences that would make it a bond-slave to the passions, and triumphs over them as the archangel over Satan. Often, too, it may seem buried beneath the dead leaves and dross of earth; but a resurrection morn dawns, a spirit-voice wakens the sleeper, an angel rolls away the stone, and the freed soul springs from the sepulchre to Heaven. For neither the low passions nor the petty vanities of life can long hold the gifted soul in bondage: human passions it may indeed have, stronger even and more stormy than those of duller natures, but they can never stifle entirely its divine aspirations. Daily, hourly within such a soul a great mystery, a great trilogy may be enacted—the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of the divine principle within.

The path of the soul, like that of the planet round the sun, which may be meant for its eternal symbol, is but a series of falls and uprisings. Still, through all human weakness and deflection it will be forced by the divine impulses of its nature to circle for ever round the central source of truth and light, in glorious harmony with God's great eternal laws.

Miss Martineau shows us only the grave-clothes of the up-risen spirit ; she reveals nothing of the inner life. There may have been moments of exalted aspiration ; of sublime resolves ; of passionate devotion to an ideal good ; of those deep yearnings of the lonely soul towards God so grandly defined by one of the ancients, ‘*Φυγή μόνου πρὸς μόνον*’—‘The flight of the Alone to the Alone’—but she dreams not of them : her judgments are those of a soul without faith, of an intellect without splendour, of a heart without wide human sympathies. Therefore she uplifts no Magnificat over her generation, utters no doxologies, chants no hymn of praise ; but, gathering up all the celebrities of the age, as one might gather a handful of diamonds, she flings them into her crucible and exclaims, as the brilliancy and the glitter vanish away in smoke, ‘See, they are but mere carbon after all !’ Yet all that gave them real beauty has escaped her analysis : the glorious symmetry of the many-sided intellect, and the light from Heaven they reflected.

Had Macaulay, for instance, nothing diviner in the depths of his gifted human soul than what Miss Martineau’s plummet-line has reached ? Yet it is thus she describes him, as if he were but an infinite negation : ‘He was no statesman, no logician, no lawyer, no philosopher, no poet, no orator, only an accomplished man of letters and rhetorician’—utterly devoid of heart—without moral earnestness ; and thus it was that his estimate of all character was so low, unsound, and inaccurate. His history was but epigram, his literature was but oratory—an elegant scholar, but without tenderness or sensibility or warmth, ‘whose cold life of intellect had the glitter and chill of ice.’ That he was the best talker of the age, a talker of exceeding splendour, is acknowledged, though rather too incessant, for Sydney Smith was wont to recognise as a public benefaction Macaulay’s ‘flashes of silence.’

It is not at all necessary here to combat Miss Martineau’s opinions, or to do battle with her for any of our favourite heroes, as Greek with Trojan over the dead bodies of the slain ; we record them simply because they are Miss Marti-

neau's, and therefore interesting as the judgments of one of the leading women of the age. So we leave her unmolested as she drives her chariot along the century, trailing the dead heroes after it through the dust. Of Lord Brougham she says : ' Latterly he was without political character or social influence. His law-reforms were his only titles to honour. Arrogant and egotist, without wit or temper—coarse in invective, and brutal in sarcasm—in the picture of our country there is a blur where Brougham's name ought to be.' Poor Brougham ! Could he have imagined that his ninety years' work for the progress of humanity would write no better epitaph than this upon his tomb ?

Lord Palmerston is thus judged and sentenced : ' He never inspired any belief in him in any sort of mind, except the confidence in his ability to get out of mischief after he had got into it.' The poet Moore is described as ' the dapper little chamber-songster.' And ' the crafty Alexander of Russia,' ' the narrow-minded Metternich,' and ' the double-minded Frederick of Prussia, the only use of whose existence was to be a warning to his successors,' are summed up together as ' three knaves.' Lord Londonderry is designated ' a frothy wind-bag ;' the late Sir Robert Peel as ' a diplomatic weather-cock and tactician, setting his sails as the wind blew soft or strong ;' while Palmerston, ' the gay old humbug, laughed over everything, serious in nothing beyond clinging to the height he had gained.' Lockhart ' had everything but good principles and a good heart.' Lord Chancellor Campbell is described as ' audacious, spiteful, witty, and ill-natured ; whose principal pleasure was sparring with Brougham ;' and De Quincey is noted for having ' lived till past eighty upon evil-speaking and opium.'

The brilliant women of the age fare little better at the hands of their sister authoress. They come out of her cold, desiccating grasp with the glow and the colour all rubbed off their wings, so that Psyche herself would look no better than a mere grub after such a process. Mrs. Jameson—our Irish Mrs. Jameson—daughter of Murphy, the artist, is held up to

the world as vain and voluble—pouring out with her Irish vehemence an accumulation of emotions and imaginations about Ireland and O'Connell, about Shakespeare and the Kembles, about sentiment and art, Italian Madonnas and the London stage, and all the ill-usage which women who have hearts receive from men who have none : restless, expatiating, fervent, unreasoning Mrs. Jameson. Yet also generous and accomplished—this much is acknowledged at least—of indomitable sociability, large liberalism, but deep prejudices. Separated from her husband, she became the idol and the prophetess of a coterie ; ever craving for society, she could only live in the glare of social praise, with that morbid egotism natural to a woman of genius who finds herself acknowledged as one of the celebrities of the age.

Poor Amelia Opie, 'vain, weak, and womanly,' retiring from life into a picturesque Quaker dress, and gently rejoicing that she looked pretty in it, is crushed altogether by the might of Miss Martineau's remorseless adjectives. Her analysis of Alexander von Humboldt, that grand high priest of nature, leaves little else as a residuum than 'a vain old man' who thought it nobler work to dangle after a king, looking for stars and orders, than to count the suns of heaven from the summit of the Andes. Her detestation of Lord Byron seems a fanatical hatred, if one could imagine Miss Martineau fanatical about anything ; but her worship of Lady Byron rises to a *Latria* : she sees in this cold, suspicious, half-mad, unattractive woman 'all that is beautiful and good—an angel of mercy, charity, and love ;' and having thus erected an altar to the fated and fatal Clytemnestra of her lord, she proceeds to build up two other altars, one to the Duchess of Kent and the other to the Duchess of Gloucester. Both these royal ladies are warmly eulogised, and some interesting scraps of royal gossip are found in the sketches—such as, a plot was organised to declare King William mad, place the Duke of Cumberland on the throne, pass over the Princess Victoria, and set aside the succession in her line ; but the death of the King, and the universal enthusiastic joy with which the whole nation

received the young Princess as Queen, destroyed the projects and the hopes of the King of Hanover.

The life of the Duchess of Gloucester is inwoven with much of the romance of a past generation. In her youth she was known as the beautiful Princess Mary, the most fascinating of all the daughters of George III., perfect in manners and in grace. She and her cousin, the Duke of Gloucester, became deeply attached to each other, but State reasons interposed, and a marriage was projected between the Duke and the Princess Charlotte. Thus the lovers were kept for long years in suspense, until the time when, the Princess Charlotte having given her heart and hand to the handsome Leopold of Coburg, they were at last free to wed, and afterwards lived as happily as lovers in a story-book ; for, though youth and beauty had well-nigh vanished, the grace and fascinations for which the Princess was so remarkable remained to the last unchanged by time's cold, blighting hand.

The Duke of Gloucester had also a history. All readers of past gossip know that Horace Walpole's widowed niece, the beautiful Countess Waldegrave, so captivated the heart of the Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III., that he married her despite of all the opposition of the indignant royal family, who revenged themselves, however, afterwards on the young Duchess by a series of heartless persecutions and insults, the details of which are recorded in her own touching letters to her uncle Horace ; from which it would appear that her married life was one long expiation for the fate which had placed her so near the throne. Yet she had some compensation ; her husband loved her, and she assumed gracefully and with dignity the rank and position her title gave her. She had her household, and held receptions as one of the royal family, greatly to the disgust of Queen Charlotte. Of this love-marriage came one son, afterwards Duke of Gloucester ; and it was to this nephew of George III., and grand-nephew of Horace Walpole, that the Princess Mary was united. But they left no family, and so the royal kinship of the Walpoles and Waldegraves no longer exists.

Miss Martineau's tributes of admiration are few and rare, but she mentions Charlotte Brontë with affection, and notes the fine eyes, soft, beautiful brown hair, and simple neatness of dress of that renowned authoress. Of the sterner sex she has also selected a few for pedestals, and crowned them with a grim, defiant air. Archbishop Whately is one of these, and she quotes a good saying of his : ' It is not enough to believe what you maintain—you must also *maintain* what you *believe*.' The Napiers, too, are eulogised as ' the race whose mission was to thrash tyrants.' Lady Sarah Lennox, mother of the ' fighting Napiers,' and her sisters are all interesting historical characters. The beautiful Lady Sarah had the honour of declining the proffered hand of George III., who was passionately in love with her ; one of her sisters was mother of Charles James Fox, and the other of our own loved and fated Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Miss Martineau's highest enthusiasm, however, is bestowed upon Robert Owen, in whom alone she sees the prime mover of the march of man ; the Moses of the modern progressive humanity. But her best, cleverest, sharpest, wickedest piece of writing is her description of John Wilson Croker, who ' earned his livelihood by tomahawking authors in the *Quarterly*—under whose tongue was the poison of asps, and who poured out his venom for forty years long upon friends and foes alike.' This brilliant, keen, scathing, sarcastic, terrible Irishman—Connaughtman—who swooped down upon the world with a vial of wrath in his hand from the apparently peaceful, harmless sanctitudes of Trinity College, was, according to Miss Martineau, ferocious as an Italian or a Greek bandit. All the false and cruel articles that disgraced the *Review* were by him. He attacked for the sake of wounding. Like the cuttle-fish, his weapon of offence was ink, and he flung it in the face of all who came in his way ; for if he could not injure, he could at least defile. All his most intimate friends he stabbed to the heart under shelter of his anonymity. He stabbed Scott when he was dying and Moore when he was dead, and plunged a sword into the heart of Mrs. Moore while yet in the first sorrow of

her widowhood. And he would have killed bright, clever, brilliant, witty Lady Morgan over and over, as everyone knows, only she had the pluck of an Irishwoman and a tongue as keen as his own. Happily for us, this terrible Viking of the *Quarterly* is no more ; and we in this age may now comfortably pour forth our platitudes in peace. Disraeli helped to slay him in 'Coningsby,' and Macaulay finally killed him outright in the *Edinburgh*. There is considerable vigour in Miss Martineau's sketch of Croker. It is only to be regretted that he was obliged to die before he had the chance of reading it.

The biographies of Hallam and of Lockhart have a great deal of interest, without being *very* homicidal. Lockhart, so strong in mental power, so grand in physical beauty, a Titan that seemed able to defy earth, fate, and the future, yet brought so low by sorrow in his latter days, so humbled by the shafts of an unseen power, which even he with all his might could not war against, is a picture worth studying. How proudly he stood in the prime of his life and intellect in the front ranks of that splendid band of literary men which England then boasted of ; yet how sad, desolate, bereaved, and broken-hearted he was at the last ! His eldest son, that wondrous child of genius, for whom Sir Walter wrote the 'Tales of a Grandfather,' died just as the hopes of his childhood were becoming realised ; then his daughter died, and his second son, and he stood almost alone in life, like a mighty tree of the forest bereft of its branches. One child, one only daughter, was left to him ; but she became a Roman Catholic, and parent and child were estranged for life. Sir Walter Scott's two sons had died childless and his race was continued only in the line of his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart ; and so it happened that this lady, Lockhart's only surviving child, became the legal representative of Sir Walter's line, and the owner of Abbotsford.

The biography of Hallam, the historian of the 'Middle Ages,' is one that awakens much sympathy, especially that portion of it relating to his gifted son, Arthur Hallam, who

died abroad, sadly and suddenly, when just engaged to be married to the poet Tennyson's sister ; and thus the world had 'In Memoriam' in exchange for a lost life.

The historian is pictured as a truly learned scholar ; rapid, genial, overflowing with vivacity, even to the close of his eighty years' pilgrimage through life ; yet full of dissent from everybody, so that Sydney Smith described Hallam at a dinner-party 'with his mouth full of cabbage and contradiction.'

We may observe here that all the pleasant things in Miss Martineau's volumes are the utterances of this celebrated wit, Sydney Smith. Bishop Blomfield's pompous identification of himself with the Established Church he illustrated by saying that the Bishop's dinner-invitations should be sent out : 'The Church of England and Mrs. Blomfield request the pleasure of' &c., &c.

And, talking of Rogers, the poet, whose tediousness in the process of composition was so extreme that during his long life of ninety-six years he gave the world only two octavo volumes, he affirmed that when Rogers produced a couplet the knocker was tied up, straw laid down, caudle was made, and the answer to inquirers was, 'Mr. Rogers is going on as well as can be expected.'

Rogers was rich and generous ; he lived in the fashionable world, and his literary breakfasts, where successive generations of literati learned wisdom from his bitter, caustic criticisms, were famous in the century. He was celebrated also for the elegance and taste of all the arrangements that surrounded him. Byron remarked this ; and Baron Bunsen, in one of his letters, notices with approbation the delicate and refined organisation of the poet's mind as evinced at his dinners, where, instead of a vulgar, blinding, flaring glare of gas pouring down upon the heads of the unfortunate, half-asphyxiated guests, the lights were so disposed that while the room was fully illuminated, the dinner-table alone rested in a soft shadow. Rogers evidently felt, with all sensitive natures, the truth of Sydney Smith's aphorism, that 'light puts out conversation.'

The late amiable and gifted Viceroy of Ireland, Lord Carlisle, is one of Miss Martineau's favourites, and she gracefully says of him that he was 'the best-beloved man of his generation.' Professor Wilson ('Christopher North,') is noticed for his splendid presence, 'which realised the ideal of the first created man, so full was it of vitality and sentience.' But these angel words are few and far between. In general Miss Martineau treads the past like a Valkyrian prophetess—one of 'the choosers of the slain.' She seeks victims for sacrifice, not heroes for worship. Yet it would be of little use to write biographies unless there were something in the life, words, or works of a man that was related to the Eternal. These great illustrations of a past age may all have had great faults. Lyndhurst was cynical and morose; Brougham arrogant and insolent; Macaulay cold and heartless; Rogers sarcastic; Lord Campbell spiteful; Croker malignant; Landor bitter in face and bitterer in temper: but of what value to the world are the petty details of their weakness and failings? We want to know simply what great thoughts a man has added to the world's treasures; what great impulses he gave to the world's progress. If none, let him rest in peace: we do not need the vulgar gossip of his faults. For a great man's faults in general come only from his temperament, and the temperament is but a malady of the human system, not of the soul. Each age flings its treasures on the shores of Time from the drifted wrecks of human life: let us gather the eternal treasures, but leave the rest to the waters of oblivion.

Looking back over English history, we may say that at no period was so much gained for the people as during the last half-century. It gave to the Empire statesmen, warriors, orators, poets, philosophers, writers, whose names are for all time. The men of this day are but as grasshoppers before the race of Anak, strong and mighty, that existed then, and led the world upward and onward. Let it be remembered of them, also, that they did not desecrate their gifts to unworthy uses: they were earnest co-workers for human right—eloquent utterers of the true. This generation stands on the elevation

these men built up, and enjoys a wider horizon freed from many a barrier of prejudice and cant because of their life-long labours for liberty and light. They worked for freedom, education, civil and religious equality, and achieved what they worked for. They created also a splendid school of criticism based upon a reverence for nature and truth ; and, finally not the least, however, of their merits—they brought the English language to a perfection which makes it now the grandest, richest, most powerful, and most expressive of all the modern organs of thought.

It is remarkable that these men sprang mostly from the middle class. They were self-reliant and self-made. Fortune gives splendid opportunities to some, and nothing comes of it. To others she denies all gifts of ease and opulence ; yet how often from amidst such a class a brow is lifted on which destiny has written unmistakably 'lord and master' ! But to natural gifts these world-leaders of the past added also indomitable perseverance. They were incessant in work and magnificent in ambition ; not the paltry ambition of social distinctions, but that which comes of a deathless desire to speak out the word that burns at the heart, and make of it a lever to lift humanity to the noblest altitudes. They also all began life early, and 'rushed up the narrow path leading to fame' at an age when energy, faith, and hope are illimitable. It is Bulwer who says, 'In the glorious lexicon of youth there is no such word as "fail."' For them no such word existed ; and, as the result, we find that all of them were famous before they reached the age of twenty-five. They had the courage of conscious power, and self-trust, we know, is the first secret of success ; 'the belief that if you are here the Authorities of the Universe put you here for a cause, for some strictly-appointed task, and so long as a man works at that he is wise and successful.'

But, if they began life early, they were also long in leaving it. Nothing is more striking in vital statistics than the longevity of literary people. Brain-work does not kill, like the hand-work of the artisan. A long list could be given of

the clever men and women of the last generation whose lives extended nearly to a century. Yet the literary or mental life in any form of manifestation is not a happy one. The world, with all its brightness and joy, seems made only for the feeble and frivolous souls who are idle while others work. It is also a lonely life. The gifted stand on heights the crowd can never reach. Even in the midst of the very praise they aspire after, the instinct of isolation is strong in them, and they pine to rush back again to the great free, solemn desert where they are alone with heaven and their own soul ; to the silent grandeur of those lonely hours of thought where the spirit renews its strength in commune with the Eternal.

It is a true saying of one of the old Platonists, 'no solitude, no glory,' and this passionate yearning for soul-solitude, so necessary to genius, yet so difficult to obtain, is perhaps the very cause of the strange, irritable, cynical eccentricities of temper and manner so often observable in the priesthood of intellect. Like Faust, they hate the crowd of petty people and small anxieties which for ever break in upon and dissipate the world 'which, for himself, the lonely man's imagination builds.'

Thus, what the soul gains in strength by the lofty, isolated life the temper often loses in human gentleness. Of these great workers and thinkers, few lived in the genial warmth of domestic ties. Many of them never married, and of those who did, most were unhappy, because marriage was unsuited to them. The fire in the veins of such men is lit by aspiration, by ambition, by a passionate longing for that recognition from the world which we call fame. They may desire sympathy, for that is the homage of soul to soul ; but love, with its fiery passion and madness, more often devastates an intellect than stimulates it to exertion and ascension. A great writer, or thinker, or worker, is perhaps at his best when he holds himself free as an Arab of all bondage, even of the tender human affections. Leave him, then, to the influences of the universe ; let the ages pour their treasures into his soul, that his genius may transmute them into the vital forces that

move the world. The gifted are a consecrated race. They have a noble mission, but it must be worked out in the loneliness of a life lifted above the human. Let them accept the doom with the glory. It must be granted that these men of the past were faithful to their mission, even through much toil, and strife, and bitter warfare. They plucked up the weeds that stifled intellect, they cleared out the rubbish from the sanctuary, and cast down that they might reconstruct on nobler models. The world now walks in the track of light their labours left, and can never more retrograde to the darkness and bondage from which they freed it. During the last half-century what marvellous and mystic powers of nature have been revealed, which, like slaves of the lamp, seem ready to fulfil the wildest imaginations of man's heart!—while education, like a central fire, is upheaving the great granite mass of the people, on which all kingdoms rest, and, wherever that burning torrent of light and knowledge flows, the rudest strata may become veined with gold.

The human race is now in truth rising up to possess the world, which is its heritage, with hymns of freedom and songs of hope ; and for the good work done in the cause of light and progress, of independence and liberty, of knowledge and spiritual and legal emancipation, let us reverently honour the memories of these great kings of thought who have now passed to their rest with the calm, divine, majestic dead.

LADY BLESSINGTON

THERE could be no greater contrast to the cold, bitter, sarcastic, unlovely and unloving Harriet Martineau, than the brilliant, genial, and beautiful Marguerite, Countess of Blessington, loved, worshipped, even adored by all who came under the spell and magic witchery of her presence and conversation. The name of Lady Blessington was long associated in London with wealth, rank, intellect, splendour of position, and the lavish homage of all the gifted minds of the age. For twenty years she reigned in the social circles as queen paramount of intellect and the mental history of the century would be incomplete without a page devoted to her remarkable career.

By the desire of her family her papers and correspondence were placed in Dr. Madden's hands after her death, for publication as he should think fit ; and the result has been an admirable addition to the biographical literature of the century. There is nothing trivial, nothing that has not some permanent interest as illustrating the character of remarkable persons. The correspondence, also, is judiciously selected, comprising every great name that England has known for the last forty years. Letters from all the celebrated men of the era may be found in it, forming a collection of wit and wisdom unrivalled in any modern published correspondence for variety, extent, and interest.

Lady Blessington's life was made up of the most startling contrasts ; and her biographer has placed this human life before us with all its faults and follies, its splendours and

triumphs, for us to search into and work out whatever help we can towards unravelling the mystery of destiny that lifts up and casts down by some unseen force which the frail human being is unable to resist.

With the feelings, the short-comings, and the weakness of a temperament unable to resist temptation, he shows us also the nobler elements of Lady Blessington's nature, the generous heart, the tender sympathy, the soft womanly feelings, always radiating sunshine upon darkened lives, and makes the ever-during good plead pardon, as it were, for the transient evil. One is of the soul, immortal and eternal—part of its own undying essence ; the other was the result of circumstance—an unguided youth, an unorganised education, a fatal, miserable marriage ; and later, the seductive influence of an atmosphere of adulation—the madness of literary excitement, warring vanities, and agonies of display, into which she was plunged ; the turmoil and the glory with which the world always surrounds the beautiful, the wealthy, and the brilliant.

And out of all these mighty influences to evil, she had to work out a pure law of life, for she had been taught none—that stern law which says, LOVE NOT THE WORLD. Was it an easy task ? Let him or her who has been so gifted, tried, and tempted, answer. And yet there were strivings after it, and deep sadness at conscious failures. And sometimes a sense of the awfulness of life rose up before her in the still silence of the night, when the incense clouds of praise no longer threw a mist between her and heaven. For in the record she has left of those hours, called 'The Book of Night Thoughts,' we can trace dim yearnings for a higher life of purity and power ; aspirations for pardon and peace ; the viewless sorrow, the inner weeping of a soul over its own sin.

That she was happy appears nowhere, either in her letters or diaries ; yet hers was a life diffusing happiness—all were benefited who approached her. Her kindness was instinct, yet ardent as though it had been passion ; and, above all women of her time, she fascinated : and fascination is a moral grace, for it has its source in the soul—it is gentleness, kind-

ness, charity. In this, therefore, we find something whereon to rest an admiration of her, and out of which to seek a model. A life of radiance and glitter was not wholly lost for higher ends. There were some divine elements in it that at the last hour angels might carry up to the throne of God, to plead for the weak woman's nature that was to stand before his judgment seat. How many timid, struggling intellects she encouraged, till they rose into power and success ! How she sympathised with the suffering, relieved the distressed, and supported honourably those who had sacrificed her young life for their own sordid interests. These things we can trace through her correspondence. 'I write for money,' she says, 'and what will sell.' 'I never write,' says Landor, 'but to better men.' Here was the contrast between a weak and an exalted nature. But why does she write trash and twaddle—'whatever the publishers want, and that is always trash'? Was it to deck her person with more jewels ? No. In a letter to Landor, she says—'I have been very unwell of late. The truth is, the numerous family of father, mother, sister, brother, and his six children that I have to write for, compels me to write, when my health would demand a total repose from literary exertion.'

This father, who was supported, throughout his very good-for-nothing life, by his daughters, three countesses, like the poor old *Père Goriot* in Balzac's novel, was a Mr. Power, of Waterford, who afterwards resided at Clonmel with his family—a rough, rude specimen of the Irish middle class of sixty years ago ; handsome and rollicking, illiterate and pretentious, fond of rioting and revellings, of field-sports and garrison society, dissipated abroad and brutal at home. In '98 he was a magistrate, hunting rebels, though a Roman Catholic himself ; the end of which hunting was, that he shot one under suspicious circumstances of undue haste, was tried for murder, but acquitted. The mother, of the maiden name of Sheehy, was a plain, uncultivated woman, without pretension of any sort ; a negation of all gifts, of whom nothing particular is recorded but that she died in Clarendon Street, Dublin. Of

this unpromising pair were born three daughters—Marguerite, who became afterwards Countess of Blessington ; Ellen, Viscountess Canterbury ; and Mary Anne, Countess de St. Marsault. This exaltation of the Power family seems a strange freak of destiny ; nothing leads up to it by any perceptible sequence. That *one* girl out of the obscure Irish village of Knockbritt should have been raised to the peerage were a triumph of Irish beauty sufficient to satisfy the imagination of any romancist ; but here are *three*, from the one family, all destined to wear the coronet.

However, the Sheehys could claim kindred with the best blood in Ireland, though it was only in the old time, long ago. Latterly they had sunk to minor situations, such as provincial editors, masters of workhouses, and the like. Amongst her ancestors by the mother's side, Lady Blessington could claim the chiefs of Thomond, Desmond, Ormond, and the O'Sullivan—dukes, marquises, and barons—high blood and noble, and rebel blood, too ; for without it her nature would not have been so intensely Irish. Her mother's father, Edmund Sheehy, was executed for rebellion in 1766 ; a maternal cousin, Father Sheehy, was, for a like political offence, hanged, drawn, and quartered at Clonmel ; and her mother's brother was murdered on his own property. These events, probably, disgusted her early with the romantic theories of Irish revolutionists, out of which no fact ever comes but death. In one of her letters to Dr. Madden, she says :—‘ Women, in my opinion, have no business with politics ; and I, above all women, have a horror of mixing myself up with them. I must content myself in wishing well to my poor country.’

The early days of the young Marguerite were passed at Clonmel, where the father's house became the resort of the usual Irish provincial society—the garrison, the assize bar, and the political adherents of the favourite member. The usual Irish provincial life followed—dancing and drinking, politics and love ; but none excited the latter passion, at assize ball or other provincial festivities, like the two Miss Powers, Marguerite and Ellen. Every one talked of their

beauty, their grace in dancing, and their elegance in dress. Every one was in love with them, especially the garrison ; and in one day Marguerite, then but fifteen, had two offers for her hand from officers of family and fortune. One of these gentlemen she liked ; the other she feared and dreaded with an intuitive shrinking dislike and repugnance. But he was 'a better match,' and her parents accepted him for their daughter, without consulting her at all on the subject. In her own account of the circumstance, given by Dr. Madden, she says, that 'when her father announced to her that she was to marry Captain Farmer, she burst into tears, prayed, and protested, but was answered by menaces and violence ; so that finally she consented to sacrifice herself, and marry a man for whom she felt the utmost repugnance.' She had not been long under her husband's roof, when it became evident that he was subject to fits of insanity (of which her father had been aware, though he concealed the information from her). She lived with him about three months, during which time he frequently treated her with personal violence ; he used to strike her on the face, pinch her till her arms were black and blue, lock her up whenever he went abroad, and often left her without food till she felt almost famished. Finally she fled from him. Was she to blame so far ? We think not. As her biographer observes justly, 'the interests of religion, of truth, and morality do not require us to throw aside all consideration of the influence of surrounding circumstances, as the antecedents of error, when judging of a single fact.' She fled to her father's house, but there was no longer a home for her there. The parents had provided her a destiny, and thought she ought to accept it, and make the best of it. There was a Captain Jenkins, also, of the dragoons, paying attention to Ellen, the second daughter, at this time, and they fancied the beautiful Marguerite made him waver in his allegiance.

'The father was unkind, more than unkind. She was looked on as an interloper in the house—as one who interfered with the prospects and advancement in life of her sisters.' The young girl had again to seek a home, and she went to

reside with an aunt. At fifteen, with her beauty and quick warm feelings, and without a father's home or a husband's protection, she was left to battle as she might with the waves of life alone.

About this time the Tyrone militia was stationed at Clonmel ; of which corps Lord Mountjoy and Colonel Stewart, of Killymoon, were the successive colonels. They became acquainted with the Power family. Chance brought together people destined for a life-long connection. Twelve or thirteen years later Lord Mountjoy, afterwards the Earl of Blessington, became the husband of Mrs. Farmer. But we are anticipating. Lord Mountjoy went away, and took a Mrs. Browne under his protection, then living separated from her husband, and on the husband's death, he married her. They had many children ; but the only legitimate issue of this marriage was Lady Harriet Gardiner, afterwards Countess D'Orsay, and a son who died young.

Meanwhile these thirteen years of Mrs. Farmer's life—the warm spring of life, with its hot sunshine and quick tears—pass by in obscurity, we scarcely know how ; some in Paris, some in London, but her biographer offers no record of them. She has not attempted literature as yet ; and if her name is heard in the great world of fashion, it is not with plaudits. At length, in 1815, we find her residing in London, and there she again meets Lord Blessington. With extravagant sorrow, and funeral obsequies that cost 4,000*l.*, he had buried his first wife, and was now a widower. Three years after, the iron fetters that bound Mrs. Farmer to a dead marriage were also broken. Her husband, Captain Farmer, killed himself in a fit of half madness ; and, four months after the catastrophe, his widow became Countess of Blessington.

From this period her real life begins. The former had been a mere protozoic period—chaos and darkness. Now she emerges from the cloud into full splendour and magnificence—wealth, rank, distinction, and celebrity. At once her *salons* are crowded with all the distinguished men of England ; she begins to recognise that she, too, has genius ; and, if ladies of

fashion will not patronise her, she can take her position at once as leader of intellect. Now she has attained her proper sphere, and moves in it with such grace and harmony, that all are fascinated who approach her.

It was a long way from the poor Irish village of Knock-britt to the summit of London distinction ; but she has reached it, and graces the elevation. The statue is worthy of the pedestal. Her life we see is opening out into great dramatic scenes, full of startling contrasts. In the first we beheld a poor young girl, locked up, half-starved, beaten, pinched, insulted by her husband. There seems no hope for her there ; and the scene closes upon a general sobbing of the audience. But the curtain rises for the second act, and lo ! a beautiful woman—throned like a sultana, with all London worshipping at her feet. Is this a compensation, or a trial, to our poor Irish girl ? We shall see. But such is destiny. She is now twenty-eight. Let us pause to contemplate her, as described by her biographer at this period.

‘In the perfection of matured beauty, her form was exquisitely moulded, inclining to fulness, but no finer proportions could be imagined ; her movements graceful and natural at all times, in her merriest as well as gayest moods. The peculiar character of her beauty consisted in the correspondence of every feature with the emotion of her mind. The instant a joyous thought took possession of her fancy, you read it in her sparkling eyes, her laughing lips ; you heard it in her ringing laugh, clear and sweet as childhood’s merriest tones.’

But here was the grand secret of her fascination :—

‘There was a geniality in the warmth of her Irish feelings, an abandonment of all care, of all apparent consciousness of her own powers of attraction ; a glowing sunshine of good-humour and good-nature in the smiles, and wit, and laughter of this lovely woman, seldom surpassed in the looks and expression of any person, however beautiful. Her voice was sweetly modulated, and low, clear, silver-toned. All her beauty, without this exquisite sweetness of her voice, and the

witchery of its tones, would have been only a secondary attraction.'

Her voice, and this 'sweet Irish laugh of hers,' are continually alluded to by her admiring correspondents. Indeed, it is impossible not to believe in the many fascinations of Lady Blessington, but especially in her beauty and gentle kindness. All her correspondents bear witness to those graces. Her hand had been copied in marble, and Prince Schwartzberg thus writes concerning it :—

'I kiss that lovely hand, even as you permitted me when I took my leave. Send me the one of marble, that I may warm it with my lips. . . . In the midst of my solitude your image comes to console me. I love to recall your enchanting form, and the hours I passed near you seem to me a dream. . . . Write to me two lines, and a third which says Marguerite, and I am happy. When shall I see you again, and recount my adventures while you listen, resting your beautiful hand upon that lovely hair I have admired so often ?'

And Moore reminds her of the day when he beheld 'two *dazzling* faces popped out of a window in Sackville Street' (those of the sisters Marguerite and Ellen).

Lord Blessington had kept his second marriage a secret, even from his own friends. None of them were aware of it, until at a dinner given to a distinguished circle in Henrietta Street, in the same room where the 4,000*l.* catafalque of the deceased wife had lain, he entered 'with a lady of extraordinary beauty, and in bridal costume, leaning upon his arm, and presented her as Lady Blessington.' Decorations, costly as the catafalque, were now lavished on the new bride. At Mountjoy Forest she found her private sitting-room hung with crimson silk velvet, trimmed with gold. At their hotel in Paris the reception-rooms were fitted up with crimson satin and gold. Gold, and marble, and mirrors, abounded everywhere. But her ladyship's bedroom and dressing-room was 'a surprise of splendour, prepared for her by her gallant husband' (to use her own words). The bed was silvered in place of being gilt, and rested on the backs of two large silver swans. It was placed in a

recess, lined with fluted white silk, while pale-blue silk curtains, lined with white, fell from the frieze, which was supported by columns at each side. A silvered sofa, resting on a velvet carpet of pale blue, rich coffers for jewels and India shawls, a silver lamp, and all the ornaments silvered, complete the picture. The dressing-room had hangings of blue silk, covered with lace, and the furniture was all silvered like the bed. The bath-room also, with its draperies of white lace, its marble floor, painted ceiling, and alabaster lamp, in the form of a lotus, is a pretty picture to contemplate ; but we have had enough of sybarite upholstery.

The splendid town mansion of the new-married Lord and Lady became, as we have said, the rendezvous of all men of intellect—*literati*, statesmen, artists, eminent men in all professions, were the habitual visitors of the house. Two royal dukes even condescended to do homage at the new shrine of Irish beauty and intellect. Canning and Castlereagh, Lords Palmerston and Russell, Scarlett, Jekyll, Erskine, and other celebrities paid their devoirs there. Kemble and Mathews, Lawrence and Wilkie ; eminent divines, Parr and others ; Rogers and Moore were among her votaries ; and all murmured around the fair Countess their homage of admiration, respect, or gratitude ; for to all she had shown some courtesy or kindness, special and graceful. All who approached her found sympathy, and by this quick sympathy with others she won their confidence. This was perhaps the great secret of her powers of attraction, and for this beautiful and womanly grace, that made her presence, her letters, her kind words and smiles synonymous with happiness, may many errors be forgiven.

About three years after Lady Blessington's marriage, among the distinguished foreigners who appeared at her house were the Duc de Grammont, and his brother-in-law, the young Count D'Orsay. The Count was handsome as the divine Apollo, and clever and brilliant in addition. With such qualities he soon won the ardent friendship of Lord and Lady Blessington. They were meditating a tour through Italy, and proposed that he should accompany them. The rest of the party consisted of

Miss Power, afterwards the Comtesse de St. Marsault, and Mr. Charles Mathews, the great comedian, then a youth of twenty and a protégé of Lord Blessington's. At Genoa they met Lord Byron, who describes Lady Blessington, in a letter to Moore, as 'highly literary, and very pretty, even in a morning—a species of beauty on which the sun of Italy does not shine so frequently as the chandelier.'

Her ladyship was 'disappointed' in Byron.

'He expressed,' she says, 'warmly at their departure the pleasure which the visit had afforded him, and she doubted not his sincerity, not from any merit in their party, but simply that Byron liked to hear news of his old associates, and to pass them in review, pronouncing sarcasms on each as they were mentioned. His laugh is musical,' she continues, 'but he rarely indulged in it during our interview; and when he did, it was quickly followed by a graver aspect, as if he liked not this exhibition of hilarity.'

'Were I asked to point out the prominent defect in Byron's manner, I should pronounce it to be a flippancy incompatible with the notion we attach to the author of "Childe Harold," and "Manfred;" and a want of self-possession and dignity that ought to characterise a man of birth and genius. Yet his manners are very fascinating—more so, perhaps, than if they were dignified; but he is too gay, too flippant for a poet.'

'His lordship,' Dr. Madden states, 'suffered Lady Blessington to lecture him in prose, and what was worse, in verse;' especially on the publicity he gave to his domestic unhappiness when, as was said, 'Byron wept for the press, and wiped his eyes with the public.' His lordship wrote her some complimentary lines in return, but her inspiration could not make him rise above some very commonplace doggerel.

That same year, 1823, they parted at Genoa, with much mutual regret, even tears—the Blessingtons for the gaities of Rome and Naples; Byron for glory, and a grave in Greece.

If any intellect be lying latent in a human frame, it must awaken in Italy, where the earth is grand and the heavens

beautiful ; and especially in the silent Rome, where the great dead of old lie stretched upon their monumental seven hills. Besides, travelling is employment—what all women want, and the increased activity of the brain finds a manifestation somehow in the life. Lady Blessington not only beheld, but studied the world around her. Then it was her literary ambition was aroused, and the sense of power awoke in her. She read much, and strove to penetrate the beauty and mystery of the Past, whether in art or literature ; always, too, under the guidance of some leading intellect. At Genoa she had studied poetry in a poet's heart. At Rome, Naples, and Florence, she talked of antiquities with Sir William Gell ; of literature with Lord Morpeth ; and of all that was deep and noblest in the antique life with Walter Savage Landor.

Uwins the painter, Westmacott, Maclise, Sir John Herschel, were also her daily companions. With them she could investigate the heavens and the earth, temples and tombs, fallen columns and fragments of dead gods, a new planet or a buried city. Mr. Charles Mathews thus describes the mode of life at the Blessington Villa, in Naples :—

‘ A paradise of a place, with a splendid view of the Mediterranean and surrounding mountains, Vesuvius in the centre. Nothing can be more delightful than the exterior and interior. Lady Blessington is more charming than ever. This is the place, with all its associations, to draw out the resources of her mind ; to discover her talents, and be captivated by them. Our evenings are charming ; we have each of us a table in the same room, at which we prosecute our various studies, writing, drawing, reading, &c. All our conversations, which are frequent, are upon improving subjects ; the classics, the existing antiquities around us. We write essays upon various subjects proposed, which are read in the evening, opposed and defended. I am treated as one of the family. I make all my drawings in the room with them, and am going to instruct Lady Blessington in architecture. It is proposed, as all of us desire to improve ourselves in Italian, that we should learn in a class, devoting an hour each day to that study. For antiquarian

research we have all the ancient authors here to refer to. In short, there never were people so perfectly happy as we are. Whenever any excursion is proposed, the previous evening is employed in reading and informing ourselves thoroughly about what we are going to see.'

Every one of these distinguished Italian friends continued their intimacy with Lady Blessington by frequent letters after her return to London ; and thus we are indebted to this continental tour for the brilliant correspondence which forms the chief interest of her published life.

In 1823, while in Genoa, Lord Blessington lost his only legitimate son, the heir to his estates—the son of his first wife—for the second Lady Blessington had no children ; upon which event he drew up a will, so singular in its provisions that Dr. Madden imputes it to partial insanity. By this will he bequeathed all his property, except some legacies and the Tyrone estate, to Count D'Orsay, and whichever of his two daughters Count D'Orsay chose to marry ; and in case of refusal on the part of either of the daughters selected, she was to receive but 10,000*l.* These two daughters were Mary Gardiner, illegitimate, aged twelve, and Lady Harriet Gardiner, legitimate, aged eleven, both daughters of the one mother. To Lady Blessington he left a jointure of 3,000*l.* a-year. But two months after, when the will was legally executed, this jointure was reduced to 2,000*l.* a-year, while the other provisions remained the same. A strange infatuation for Count D'Orsay this appears, to offer him the choice of either of his daughters, with a bribe of a vast property appended, while the daughters themselves were then but children, who had never seen Count D'Orsay, having been brought up in Dublin under the care of an aunt.

When the will was executed, General Count D'Orsay, father to Count Alfred, accompanied by Lord Blessington, went to Ireland to see the estates, and the young ladies. Lady Harriet was selected as the future bride, her legitimacy, perhaps, being the motive of preference with the proud D'Orsay family. Meanwhile, as the young Count is not mentioned as being of the party to Ireland, he probably remained in Italy

with Lady Blessington. Curiosity even did not prompt him to go and see his bride.

Four years after this arrangement the young girl was sent for to Naples from Ireland, and the marriage took place. Count D'Orsay was then twenty-six, the bride fifteen ; and her supposed rival in the Count's affections was thirty-seven ; a disparity of years which almost precludes the idea of any rivalry whatever.

The Count received 40,000*l.* fortune with his wife, and 'separated himself from her almost at the church door.'

Dr. Madden, when on his way back from Egypt, met the Blessingtons about this time at Rome, and thus describes the young bride :—

'Lady Harriet was exceedingly girlish-looking, pale and rather inanimate in expression, silent and reserved. There was no appearance of familiarity with anyone around her ; no air or look of womanhood, no semblance of satisfaction in her new position, were to be observed in her demeanour or deportment. She seldom or ever spoke, she was little noticed, and looked on as a mere school-girl.

'I think her feelings were driven inward by the sense of slight and indifference, and by the strangeness and coldness of everything around her ; and she became indifferent, and strange, and cold, and apparently devoid of all vivacity and interest in society. People were mistaken in her, and she, perhaps, mistaken in others. Her father's act had led to all these misconceptions, ending in suspicions, animosities, aversions, and total estrangements. In the course of a few years, the girl of childish mien and listless looks, who was so silent, and apparently inanimate, became a person of remarkable beauty, *spirituelle* and intelligent, the reverse in all respects of what she was considered when misplaced and misunderstood.

'It was an unhappy marriage,' he adds, 'and nothing to any useful purpose can be said of it, except that Lord Blessington sacrificed his child's happiness, by causing her to marry without consulting her inclinations or interests.'

However, the D'Orsays and the Blessingtons continued to

reside together during the remainder of their stay abroad ; but as eight years had now been passed travelling, they thought of turning homewards. At Genoa, on their return, Lady Blessington was reminded at every spot of Byron, from whom she had there parted five years before :—

‘ While thus musing one day, she saw a young English girl, who resembled Byron in an extraordinary degree, accompanied by an elderly lady. The English girl was “ Ada, sole daughter of my house and heart,” and the elderly lady was her mother—the widow of Lord Byron.’

The year 1829 was passed at Paris in the splendid Hôtel Ney ; but the sudden death of Lord Blessington broke up the establishment at once. By this event her ladyship found herself reduced to an income of only 2,000*l.* a-year, in place of 30,000*l.* ; and besides she really seemed to regret her husband’s death from personal affection for him.

In her confidential letters long after, she speaks of much unkindness experienced at this period, after his death—of much suffering she had gone through, we know not of what nature ; for Dr. Madden states only, that ‘ painful circumstances ’ obliged the family to leave Paris ; and accordingly, the year following, 1830, Lady Blessington proceeded to London, accompanied by the Count and Countess D’Orsay. In a short time the Countess D’Orsay returned to Paris, and her husband rented a small house in Curzon street, adjoining Lady Blessington’s residence, in Seymour Place ; but after her removal to Gore House, the Count took up his abode entirely under the same roof with her ladyship. Some time after, a deed of separation was drawn up between the Count and Lady Harriet, by which he relinquished his claim on the Blessington estates for the sum of 100,000*l.*, which was agreed to, and paid by successive instalments.

On Lady Blessington’s return to London, she seriously turned her thoughts to authorship, as a means of increasing a very diminished income. First appeared, in *The New Monthly*, her ‘ Conversations with Lord Byron.’ The papers attracted immense notice, in consequence of the morbid curi-

osity, then quite an epidemic, to know something or anything of what Byron thought, said, or did. The literary reputation of the Countess was at once established, and from that till her death, novels, tales, reviews, verses, &c., never ceased flowing from her pen, all of the most mediocre nature certainly, but still they brought her an income of about two thousand a-year, or more. Not that we are to judge of their merits by that fact. Her ladyship did not write absolute trash certainly—on the contrary, she sometimes uttered very shrewd, common-sense opinions ; but there was such a total want of elevation of feeling or depth of thought in all her works, that it was impossible to read them with profit, or remember them with interest. She had neither Lady Morgan's wit, nor Mrs. Norton's almost agonising pathos ; and if compared with the lady authoresses her contemporaries, must in all things be named the lowest of the list. We speak of her works in the past tense, for they have probably disappeared from all memories and all libraries ; or if they have not, we would recommend them (in Carlyle's phrase) to gather themselves up with all possible speed and be off to the dust-bin.

Something vastly more attractive than penmanship and authorship were the fascinations that surrounded Lady Blessington, and which made her irresistible—grace, beauty, brilliancy, and kindness. Why should a woman with these gifts stain her fair hands with ink, and dim her eyes at midnight manuscripts ? Yet this she did for twenty long years of her life, working, ay, as hard as any factory-girl at her loom, and for the same reason—to support herself—not only herself, but seven or eight members of her family besides ; and in addition, all the poor Irish cousins from Clonmel—an interminable, exacting, long-lived, vigorous race, like all Irish cousins, requiring a great deal to keep up their systems. In one of her letters, she says :—

‘I am so constantly and fatiguingly occupied in copying and correcting, that I have not a moment to myself.’

Again :—

‘When I tell you that I have no less than three works

passing through the press, and have to furnish the manuscript to keep the printers at work for one of them, you may judge of my uneasiness and overwhelming occupations, which leave me time neither for pleasure nor for taking air or exercise enough for health. I am literally worn out. I look for release from my literary toils more than ever a slave did from bondage. I never get out any day before five o'clock. I am suffering in health from too much writing.'

The entire novel of 'The Repealers' was written in five weeks; and in a letter to Dr. Madden, dated 4th March, she says:—

'When I tell you that I have six hundred pages to write and compose between this and the end of the month for a work, which, unless completed by that period, I forfeit an engagement, you will understand why I cannot read over the story you sent me, and which, I am persuaded, is like all I have seen from your pen—graphic, and full of talent.'

And yet, withal, year after year, her expenditure was more than double her income. Fashionable life and literary notoriety are expensive pleasures, as she found one day to her cost, when the poor brain, with all its toil, could no longer meet the expenses of the material body with all its necessary luxuries, and appanages, and decorations. Upon this state of affairs the wise editor remarks:—

'Little was she aware of the nature of literary pursuits, or the precariousness of their remuneration, if she imagined that secure and permanent emolument could be derived from such sources. A lady of quality who sits down in fashionable life to get a livelihood by literature, or the means of sustaining herself or her position at the hands of publishers, had better build any other description of castles in the air, however ethereal the order of architecture may be.'

Too true; for does not Carlyle describe this weird race of publishers as 'seated in their back-parlour Valhallas, drinking wine out of the skulls of authors?' Very terrible to think of! But when the pen was laid aside, and the weary daily task ended, then the enchanted gates were unfolded, and the tired

toiler over manuscript became transformed into the brilliant idol of a brilliant circle.

Every evening, from ten to half-past twelve, Gore House was thrown open to visitors, like to a temple of Minerva, to which all literary votaries went up nightly to worship. The high-priestess takes her position at once, as centre and leader, and all revolve around her, suns, satellites, and stars. Stars there were in plenty. They came, not singly, nor even in binary combination, but in whole systems. A perfect *via lactea* of literary luminaries flashed through her *salons* each evening. What was this strange, indefinable, subtle, yet permanent charm which attracted to her circle every man of note in England, from the great Wellington down to the small annualists, of the day. Her writings, we have said, were not beyond mediocrity, and her conversation, however gay and sparkling, was yet wholly devoid of real wit or energetic power. Compare her with the supreme De Staël, the deep wise Rahel of Germany, the intensely earnest Margaret Fuller of America, and how commonplace and unsatisfying, as mental reagents, do all her recorded sayings fall upon the ear and heart. Was the flattery, then, that gilded her life, elicited mainly by the coronet on her escutcheon? Perhaps so; especially when the coronet on the brow crowned so much beauty and enough of genius to found sonnets on: for beauty makes a surprising difference in the reception a woman meets with in society, and the air of superiority she is privileged to assume there.

The swinging of the censer before the fair face of Lady Blessington never ceased in those *salons*; and soft accents of homage to her beauty and talent seldom failed to be whispered in her ear, while she sat enthroned in her well-known *fauteuil* (Willis tells us it was of yellow satin), holding high court in queen-like state—the most gorgeous Lady Blessington!

Truly, a life of intoxicating excitement, but fatal to all earnestness of thought; talent laid on the salver of publicity, to be breathed upon and dimmed so as at best only to reflect the shows and surfaces of things. Was it wonderful that her

literature reflected her life, dealing only with the follies and crimes, or the fashion and glitter of social life, and never descending into the real healthy humanity, such as God created, to seek for noble types and strengthening principles of action.

Madden makes some very just remarks on the inevitable tendencies of a nature fed by indiscriminate flatteries ; and on the bad effects of a life of literary display upon the mind of a woman.

Those to whom the art of pleasing becomes a business daily to be performed, pass from the excitement of society into exhaustion, languor, and ennui, and from this state they are roused to new efforts in the *salons* by a craving appetite for notice and for praise. Lady Blessington had that fatal gift of pre-eminent attractiveness in society, which has rendered so many clever women distinguished and unhappy. The power of pleasing indiscriminately is never long exercised by women with advantage to the feminine character of their fascinations.

‘The facility of making one’s self so universally agreeable in literary salons, as to be there “the observed of all observers,” becomes in a time fatal to naturalness of character and sincerity of mind. Relations with intellectual celebrities must be kept up by constant administrations of cordial professions of kindness and affection, epistolary and conversational, and frequent interchange of compliments and encomiums.

‘The praiser and the praised have a nervous apprehension of depreciation ; and those who live before the public in literature or society get not unfrequently into the habit of lavishing eulogies with a view to repayment in the same coin. The queen regnant of a literary circle must at length become an actress there ; she must adapt her manners, her ideas, her conversation, by turns, to those of every individual around her. She must be perpetually demonstrating her own attractions and attainments, or calling forth those of others. She must become a slave to the caprices, envious feelings, contentions, rivalries, selfish aims, ignoble artifices, and *exigean*ts pretensions of literati, artistes, and all the notabilities of fashionable circles.

‘Besides, the wear and tear of literary life leave very unmistakable evidence of their operation on the traits, thoughts and energies of bookish people. Like the ceaseless efforts of Sisyphus are the pursuits of the *litterati*, treading on the heels of one another day after day, tugging with unremitting toil at one uniform task—to obtain notoriety, to overcome competition, and having met with some success, to maintain a position at any cost.’

It was in Lady Blessington’s time that the epidemic of illustrated annuals broke out in England which raged with considerable flimsiness and platitude for about twenty years. Her ladyship of course became an editress ; for, as her biographer asserts with laudable candour, ‘she had a great facility for versification, and her verse was quite equal to the ordinary run of *bouts rimés*.’

Besides, a titled editress was indispensable as nurse to the small literary buds of fashion that lisped their pretty twaddle in gilded annuals, while the lady herself loved celebrities and display ; and this occupation brought her into contact with almost every literary man of eminence in the kingdom, or of any foreign country who visited England. But it also involved an enormous expense, far beyond any amount of remuneration derived from editing the works. It made a necessity for entertaining continually persons to whom she looked for contributions, or from whom she had received assistance. It involved her, moreover, in all the drudgery of authorship, in all the turmoil of contention with publishers, communication with artists, and never-ending correspondence with contributors ; in a word, it made her life miserable.

The whole system of the annuals was, in fact, a speculation based upon personal vanity. Court beauties had their pictures engraved with (as Dickens describes) the traditional background of flower-pots ; and then verses were ordered by the editor to suit these portraits. When the mothers of the nobility were exhausted, the annualists turned to the children of the nobility, whose portraits came out with impossible eyes and hair, white frocks, the flower-pot and a dog. For them

were verses in like manner ordered ; and of course the sale was unprecedented. Thus we find Lady Blessington petitioning a contributor, and really a man of genius, though he had caught the epidemic, Dr. William Beattie, for 'three or four stanzas for the work named "Buds and Blossoms," to contain the portraits of all the children of the nobility. The children for the illustration are the three sons of the Duke of Buccleuch, and an allusion to the family would add interest to the subject.'

To the same poet, too yielding, perhaps, not to be made the prey of these infantile bores, she writes again with lamentable pertinacity :—

'Will you write me a page of verse for the portrait of Miss Forrester ? The young lady is seated with a little dog on her lap, which she looks at rather pensively ; she is fair, with light hair, and is in mourning.'

During the palmy days of the pensive annuals Lady Blessington made about 2,000*l.* a year by them ; for they had this advantage to editors, that contributors were seldom paid except where a great name was sought for, at any price, to look impressive in the index. Thomas Moore was offered 600*l.* for one hundred and twenty lines, in either prose or poetry, for 'The Keepsake,' which he declined. But at length the public were surfeited with illustrated annuals. The perpetual glorifications even of beauty became a bore ; the periodical pæans sung in honour of the children of the nobility ceased to be amusing. Lords and ladies ready to write on any subject, and fashionable editors and editresses, there was no dearth of ; but readers were not to be had for love or money. A failure in Lady Blessington's income was the result. Besides, of late years it was with difficulty she could find a publisher for her novels. They would not sell ; yet she continued to write them, for it kept up the excitement of her life, and friends still praised—how falsely and absurdly it is painful to read, for the sake of literary and critical honour and veracity. Had she no friends who, when they saw her with all these irons in the fire, about new novels and the like for making money, could

boldly say, as did Dr. Johnson on a similar occasion : ‘Madam,—Put your novels with your irons?’ On the contrary, they write thus to the poor blinded one : ‘You have all the tact, truth and grace of De Staël.’ And concerning another novel, whose name is not even worth remembering now : ‘It reminds me greatly of Godwin’s writings.’ Again : ‘Your style is peculiarly fluent and original ; I do not remember any specimen of “The Rambler” equal to it.’ This is only equalled by Lady Blessington telling some poet, never heard of since, who had sent her a poem of his for her perusal, that it was ‘beyond anything in Shakespeare!’

When annuals and publishers had all failed, her ladyship turned her attention to newspapers. Her last novel, ‘Country Quarters,’ appeared in one. And she accepted an engagement from the ‘Daily News,’ at the rate of 400*l.* a year, for contributing ‘Exclusive Intelligence, or Gossiping News from High Quarters ;’ but she thought her services worth 800*l.* a year, and gave up the engagement after six months. Still her writings, such as they were, brought her an average income of about 1,000*l.* a year ; while Southey, with all his great wisdom, great learning and undoubted ability, was at the same time only making about two or three hundred, and glad even to secure that. But then four times the amount of Lady Blessington’s literary gains was spent in keeping up the *prestige* of her name as a literary leader. With what lavish magnificence she threw open Gore House for the entertainment of authors and publishers, contributors, high-bred eulogists, and unscrupulous laudators ! All who could write or help writers, all aspirants or conquerors in the lists of fame found themselves in the enchanted palace of the beautiful Armida, and unable to resist her spells.

Meanwhile, the handsome and gifted Count D’Orsay added not a little to the brilliancy of these celebrated receptions. We have said that he was twelve years younger than Lady Blessington ; a man, by all accounts, of surprising wit and beauty of appearance ; so that for twenty years he led the fashion—rather, laid down the law—in London in dress,

manners, and conversation. In fact, as a French periodical expressed it : 'D'Orsay taught the English aristocracy how to converse.' Beyond this, too, he was a gifted artist. One hundred and fifty portraits, executed by him, of the celebrities of Gore House are in existence, and have been lithographed and published by Mr. Lane. His statuettes and busts excited unmeasured praise from all judges—from the cold severe Wellington as well as the spiritual Lamartine. Haydon, the painter, with one of his vivid picturesque touches, thus describes him in his 'Diary' : 'About seven D'Orsay called, whom I had not seen for long. He was much improved, and looking "the glass of fashion and the mould of form ;" really a complete Adonis, not made up at all. He made some capital remarks, all of which must be attended to. They were sound impressions, and grand. He bounded into his cab like a young Apollo with a fiery Pegasus. I looked after him. I like to see such specimens.' Again, another entry : 'D'Orsay called, and pointed out several things to correct in the horse (the Duke's Waterloo charger), verifying Lord Fitzroy's criticism. I did them ; and he took up my brush in his dandy gloves, which made my heart ache, and lowered the hind quarters by bringing over a bit of the sky. Such a dress !—white great-coat, blue satin cravat, hair oiled and curling, hat of the primest curve and purest water, gloves scented with eau-de-cologne or eau-de-jasmine, primrose in tint, skin in tightness. In this prime of dandyism he took up a nasty, oily, dirty hogtool, and immortalised Copenhagen by touching the sky.'

We have mentioned the strange circumstances of his marriage, and how he had separated himself from his young wife, and taken up his abode entirely at Gore House. A life of literature and magnificence, of artistic employment and thoughtless expenditure seemed to suit his Athenian nature. Tradespeople gave him unlimited credit, for his taste in dress was so perfect that whatever he wore became the fashion, and they felt sufficiently compensated by being allowed to have the honour of announcing that he employed them.

But how strangely are the extremes of society connected !

Because the fields are lying black round the Irish cabins the great London world of life and light is thrown into terror and dismay.

The potato blight fell upon Gore House. Irish rents were not paid ; and as soon as the suspicion of inability to meet demands got abroad demands poured in. There were no means of meeting them. Lady Blessington's expenditure had long been more than double her receipts. Confusion and dismay came gathering darkly over her magnificence.

The lady's diamonds are pledged to meet the most urgent claims. But bills are like the frogs of Egypt, interminable and obtrusive. They came up into Pharaoh's chamber. 300*l.* for Count D'Orsay's boots ; 4,000*l.* for India shawls, silks and laces for my lady. Day by day payment was evaded. Then executions were threatened ; and 'so, while rank and genius were glittering in the *salons*, bailiffs were watching at the hall-door. For two years it was thus ; the hall door never opened but with precautions. For two years the brilliant D'Orsay could only venture out on Sundays for fear of arrest.

At length a bailiff got entrance in disguise. The lady sees that all is over, and sends a quick message to the Count's room that he has not a minute to lose. So he escapes by a back door, with a single valet and a portmanteau, and flies for refuge to France—never to behold England more—leaving debts behind him to the amount of a hundred thousand pounds.

Thus ended the magnificent London career of Count D'Orsay—the man who had revolutionised London society and made the English aristocracy for twenty years his servile imitators.

A fortnight after his flight Lady Blessington with her nieces also quitted London, never more to return thither, and followed the Count to Paris, leaving her entire property at the mercy of her creditors.

The sale then commenced at Gore House. The library of 5,000 volumes, the magnificent specimens of the fine arts, the costly ornaments of these celebrated *salons* were all sold. By

the express command of Lady Blessington nothing was reserved from the creditors except her own picture by Chalon. The sale realised above 13,000*l.*, out of which eleven pounds balance, after paying the debts, was handed over to Lady Blessington. Twenty thousand persons visited the house previous to the auction, and of all these but one is recorded as having shown any visible emotion at the wreck of a prosperity in which most of them had shared. Who, think you? Thackeray, the caustic satirist of women, the harsh denouncer of their follies, the author whose name, above all others, is hateful to the sex; whose theory of woman is expressed with bitter irony in one formula: all clever women are wicked, and all good women are fools; and yet this man, who could only see distortions of humanity, must have felt that some beautiful quality, some gentleness, kindness, generosity, or tenderness, existed in the heart that had once vivified that desolate magnificence, for he wept, and one thinks better of Mr. Thackeray for those tears.

Dr. Madden happened to be present at the sale, and thus describes this tragedy of fashion:—

‘There was a large assemblage of people of rank. Every room was thronged; the well-known library-saloon, in which *conversaziones* took place, was crowded, but not with guests. The arm-chair in which the lady of the mansion was wont to sit was occupied by a stout, coarse gentleman of the Jewish persuasion, busily engaged in examining a marble hand extended on a book, the fingers of which were modelled from a cast of those of the absent mistress of the establishment. People, as they passed through the room, poked the furniture, pulled about the precious objects of art and ornaments of various kinds that lay on the table, and some made jests and ribald jokes on the scene they witnessed. In another apartment, where the pictures were being sold, portraits by Lawrence, sketches by Landseer and Maclise, innumerable likenesses of Lady Blessington by various artists; several of the Count D’Orsay, representing him driving, riding out on horseback, sporting, and at work in his studio; his own

collection of portraits of all the frequenters of Gore House, in quick succession were brought to the hammer. It was the most signal ruin of an establishment of a person of high rank I had ever witnessed.'

Gore House itself had also a destiny : first, it belonged to the great Wilberforce, who records how he 'repeated the 119th Psalm there in great comfort ;' then Lady Blessington became the proprietor, upon which James Smith wrote :

The chains from which he freed the Blacks
She rivets on the Whites ;

from her hands it passed to those of the renowned Soyer. 'The culinary replaced the literary,' and so for ever after Gore House will be associated with social freedom, mental light and corporeal regeneration.

Lady Blessington quitted London in April 1849. The whole fabric of her greatness had crumbled in the dust. At sixty years of age she found herself a fugitive in Paris—youth, beauty, wealth, *prestige*, magnificence all gone. Nothing remained to her but her energetic intellect. By this she strove to build up another future. Already she planned new works of literature and new modes of life. A biography of remarkable women was to issue from her pen, and she was to spare no pains in reading up for it. She took a new residence and furnished it with all that elegance of luxury and oriental brilliancy of decoration which she could not help evidencing. The taste was instinctive to her—part of her nature. The spirit of her youth seemed to come back to brave the desolation of her age, but the heart was silently breaking the while ; what wonder if it were so ? On June 3, just seven weeks after the flight from her London home, she removed to her new residence in Paris from the hotel where she had been located, her health and spirits apparently good, even better than usual. But that morning she had already entered the dark shadow of death, although those around her saw it not. Pomp and pleasure, praise and fame, and all the lights of life

were going out one by one, and God alone is by her in the last darkness. That night she died, not without some suffering, but yet apparently unconscious that the fiat of her doom had gone forth. No priest knelt by her bedside, no prayer seems to have been uttered. Her last words were, '*Quelle heure est-il ?*' and then she passed calmly into eternity. The last hour of the clock of time had tolled for her.

She was buried at St. Germain. Her mausoleum was designed by Count D'Orsay and her epitaph written by Barry Cornwall and Walter Savage Landor; while Irish ivy, brought for the purpose from her native village, was planted round her grave. The story of her life seemed thus symbolised by her tomb.

Count D'Orsay's grief at her death is described as almost frantic; besides, he experienced most bitter disappointment, it is said, at the cold reception given him by Louis Napoleon, of whom both he and Lady Blessington had once been the friends and benefactors.

Once, indeed, they had been invited to dine at the *Elysée*; but for eighteen months previous to the Count's death the Emperor took no notice of him whatever.

Thus, without fortune, without friends, and deprived of her who had been his companion for twenty years, Count D'Orsay naturally fell into melancholy, then into bad health; and finally, about three years after Lady Blessington's death, he died, and was laid in the same tomb, in the stone sarcophagus which he had ordered to be placed there for himself at the time of her interment. Five months after his death the Countess D'Orsay married a second time.¹

Count D'Orsay had many gifts, yet withal he can never stand before the mind as a character that interests. A life of vanities and fopperies, of egoism and weakness, though passed amidst the beauties of art and the excitement of literary society, was still a life without divinity; and we turn, with feelings stronger even than disapproval, from the contemplation of the marriage, and the neglect of the young wife, while

¹ The Honourable Spencer Cowper, brother to Lady Jocelyn.

at the same time he squandered her patrimony. When he was friendless and fallen we feel, not sorrow, but a sort of gladness that retribution was exacted ; and then only when he is weak and suffering, wounded and broken in spirit, does the man attain any dignity in our eyes. Suffering seems to purify and ennoble all natures, for we recognise it as the shadow of God's presence upon a human life. But one has true pity for the sunny heart darkened into error by the force of circumstances and the harsh will of those who ruled its fate. The biography of a woman is always sad—a war between feeling and destiny—but that of a gifted woman especially so ; for high intellect and vivid passions are hard to rule and tame and formalise ; and such exceptional natures seem to have a singular inaptitude for the contracted sphere within which society places them.

Even in the limited space of the last half century, how many, if not wretched, at least unhappy hearts and blighted lives can be enumerated amongst those who possessed the fatal gift of intellect? Mrs. Hemans ; the beautiful and most richly endowed Caroline Norton ; Lady Lytton Bulwer, who seems to have flung down the gauntlet to male humanity with helpless rage ; they only smile at her indignant sense of wrong, and bid her suffer and be silent. And, saddest of all, lies 'L. E. L.' in her death-sleep on that fatal foreign shore ; but we cannot think beside such a grave, it is enough to weep.

All these lives were, no doubt, beautiful in their aurora light, but the moment they rose in mental power above the prescribed level of their sex the lightning struck them.

Lady Blessington was not exempt from this apparent law of Providence ; her own testimony of herself is, 'I have drunk the cup of bitterness to the very dregs.' The great fault of her character seemed to be an incapacity for profound thought on any subject. She lived on passionately from day to day—excitement the very vital breath of her existence ; never caring or thinking whither it was all tending, but purposing, some day or other, when she had time, to think seriously about

religion ; and thus it was till the end came. There is, therefore, no tragedy in her life, no deep earnestness, and therefore no despair. If she begins a letter with a few melancholy phrases, she ends : 'The opera is charming ; I never miss a night.'

Though born and reared a Roman Catholic, yet she talks of herself on one occasion as 'a stern Protestant,' merely because those around her were so ; and she forgot for the moment exactly what she believed. Another time, with the same comprehensive sympathy, she speaks of her 'proud feelings as an Englishwoman,' quite oblivious of Tipperary and the murdered Sheehys ; though, when writing to Dr. Madden, her love for 'her poor country' is ardently expressed, and this not from the falsehood but the levity of her nature ; for, being herself incapable of deep fanatic feeling on any subject, she unconsciously, or good-naturedly, from a wish to please, echoed the sentiments of those more earnest souls with whom she came in contact. Therefore we seek in vain in her writings for any revelations of the inner world, wrought out of earnest, patient reflection on the mystery and the sacred ends of life. No spirit-voice chanted to her, as it has done to higher natures :—

Each word we speak has infinite effects ;
Each soul we pass must go to heaven or hell—
God ! fight we not within a cursed world ;
And this, our one chance through eternity ?
Be earnest, earnest, earnest : mad, if thou wilt ;
Do what thou dost as if the stake were heaven,
And it thy last deed, ere the judgment-day.

Yet every life, however weak, has something in it which may teach, either as a warning or a model. It is only in the lives of others, not in our own, that we can study human life as a whole ; our own life is fragmentary. We pass blindfold into each successive moment with trembling volition, knowing not what the dictum of our decision may bring forth. Clear vision comes only when it is too late, and we see then how error and

misery came of egoism and blind passion. But in biography, if written truly, we trace clearly the inseparable connection between weakness and suffering, error and punishment, sin and remorse, and we start back warned from the same fatal path; while, on the other hand, the records of courage will strengthen and earnestness inspire, long after the heroes or martyrs have been laid low in their graves. And thus it is that the hands of the dead guide us best through the future.

The correspondence of Lady Blessington is full of interest, for though she herself did not contribute much to it either of wit or learning, yet she elicited both in a remarkable degree from those who came within her influence, and we can estimate the power she exercised over her age by the number of celebrated men who felt proud to be ranked amongst her correspondents.

A woman truly is the genius of epistolary communication. Men always write better to a woman than to their own sex. No doubt they conjure up, while writing, the loving listening face, the tender, pardoning heart, the ready tear of sympathy, and passionate confidences of heart and brain flow rapidly from the pen—confidences that never would have been revealed to spirits made of sterner stuff.

There is one noticeable characteristic of Lady Blessington's own letters, which is, the entire absence of literary egotism. There is no seeking for praise or compliment upon her own works; on the contrary, they are treated of slightly, thrown off in a phrase as things of no value; while whatever concerns the friend she may be writing to, his acts, words, works, and feelings are discussed with the most ardent and apparently genuine interest.

Always she has some pleasant word of praise to utter, or favourable notice of them to repeat, which had come to her knowledge. Besides which, we find her aiding them always, as best she could, with publishers and the public; getting their works printed, often correcting the proofs herself, and undertaking to write favourable reviews in the leading journals.

No wonder that all her friends loved to hear from her, and to cultivate the correspondence of one who never wrote but to please. Landor, in one of his letters to her, says with an intensity of appreciation one cannot help feeling half jealous of when uttered by such a man : ‘ With your knowledge of the world, and, what is rarer, of the human heart, the man is glorified who enjoys your approbation ; what, then, if he enjoys your friendship ? ’

What articles of kind flattery and graceful falsehood she must have poured from her pen for the thousand literary friends who all wrote books or verses, and who all demanded from her praise public or praise private ! Every literary journal probably could bear evidence of this amiable mendacity of friendship. Vicomte d’Arlincourt, a French gentleman who travelled through England and Ireland, and who assisted, it is said, at the coronation of O’Connell upon Tara of the Kings, writes to her ladyship on the publication of his travels in this strain :—

‘ I long to hear what the London journals say about it. No doubt at *your* solicitation they will accord me a favourable notice. Let some rays of your glory fall upon my humble work laid at your feet, and its success will be brilliant, and its author will bless you.’

Again :—

‘ Sweet sister, my travels will soon appear ; oh, sustain them, protect them ! Let a palm leaf from your coronal fall on them as a talisman of protection. There is no need to recommend my pecuniary interests, for I know that you will look after *them* also.

‘ Talk of my book ! Make it talked of ! Patronised by you it must become the fashion. . . . My tutelary angel, a thousand thanks for your charming article in the “ Court Journal.” Continue to help my book, sweet sister ; sustain its steps upon a foreign soil.’

The correspondence, indeed, includes every memorable name in English literature, from Lord Byron to Walter Savage Landor, that noblest of literary veterans, the last of a Titan

race, who retained the energy and force of youth with the matured wisdom of an eighty years' life. His letters alone, full of originality and deep thought, are worth the whole of Moore's published correspondence put together, and what wisdom, beauty, poetry, and sublimity in his immortal 'Conversations !' Lady Blessington tells him in one of her letters how he is praised, and he answers scornfully yet feelingly :—

'I did not believe such kind things would be said of me for a century to come. Perhaps, before we meet, even fashionable persons will pronounce my name without an apology, and I may be patted on the head by dandies, with all the gloss on their coats and unfrayed straps to their trousers.

'It occurs to me that authors are beginning to think it an honest thing to pay their debts, and that they are debtors to all by whose labour and charges the fields of literature have been cleared and sown. We have been a rascally gang hitherto. Few writers have said all the good they thought of others, and fewer have concealed the ill. They praise their friends, because their friends, it may be hoped, will praise them. As these propensities seem inseparable from the literary character, I have always kept aloof from authors where I could.

'*Southey* stands erect, and stands alone. I love him no less for his integrity than his genius. No man in our days has done a twentieth part for the glory of literature.'

Of Coleridge he says :—

'The opium-eater calls Coleridge the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and most comprehensive that has yet existed amongst men. Impiety to Shakspeare ! treason to Milton ! I give up the rest, even Bacon. Certainly since their day we have seen nothing at all comparable to him. Byron and Scott were but as gunflints to a granite mountain. Wordsworth has one angle of resemblance ; *Southey* has written more, and all well, and much admirably. Foster has said grand things about me ; but I sit upon the earth with my heels under me, looking up devoutly to this last glorious ascension. Never ask me about the rest. If you do, I shall only answer in the cries that you are likely to hear at this

moment from your window—"Ground ivy! ground ivy! ground ivy!"

One would like to quote every line that Landor has written, but, as that is impossible, let us content ourselves with plucking and setting down a stray thought here and there.

Of Byron he says :—

'Do not be angry with me for my sincerity as regards Byron. The bosom of Byron never could hold the urn in which the muse of Tragedy embalms the dead. There have been four magic poets in the world. We await the fifth monarchy, and, like the Jews with the Messiah, we shall not be aware of it till it comes.'

'The Rhine, exclusive of its castles and legends, will bear no comparison with the Lake of Como. It wants majestic trees, it wants Italian skies, it wants *idleness* and *repose*—the two most heavenly of heavenly things, the most illusory of illusions—

'Most things are real to me, except realities.'

'I detest the character of Rousseau, but I cannot resist his eloquence. He had more of it, and finer than any man. Demosthenes' was a contracted heart, and even Milton's was vitiated by the sourness of theology.'

'I have this instant sent your note to poor ——. It has made him very ill. He is about to publish a drama on the Deluge, on which he tells me he has been engaged for twenty years. You cannot be surprised that he is grievously and hopelessly afflicted, having had water on his brain so long.'

'I find that Coleridge has lost the beneficent friend at whose house he lived. George IV., the vilest wretch in Europe, gave him 100*l.* a year—enough, in London, to buy three turnips and half an egg a day. Those men surely were the most dexterous of courtiers who resolved to show William that his brother was *not* the vilest, by dashing the half egg and three turnips from the plate of Coleridge. No such action as this is recorded of our administration in the British annals.'

'The author of the "Arabian Nights" was the greatest benefactor the East ever had, not excepting Mahomet. How

many hours of pure happiness has he bestowed on six-and-twenty millions of hearers ! All the springs of the desert have less refreshed the Arabs than those delightful tales, and they cast their gems and genii over our benighted and foggy regions.'

'I am sorry you sent my "Examination" by a private hand. I never in my life sent even a note by a private hand. Nothing affects me but pain and disappointment. Hannah More says : "There are no evils in the world but sin and bile." They fall upon me very unequally. I would give a good quantity of bile for a trifle of sin, and yet my philosophy would induce me to throw it aside. No man ever began so early to abolish hopes and wishes. Happy he who is resolved to walk with Epicurus on his right and Epictetus on his left, and to shut his ears to every other voice along the road.'

'After a year or more I receive your "Reminiscences of Byron." Never, for the love of God, send anything again by a Welshman—I mean anything literary. Lord D.'s brother, like Lord D. himself, is a very good man, and if you had sent me a cheese would have delivered it safely in due season.'

'When I was at Oxford I wrote my opinion on the origin of the religion of the Druids. It appeared to me that Pythagoras, who settled in Italy, had ingrafted, on a barbarous and bloodthirsty religion, the humane doctrine of the Metempsychosis. It would have been vain to say, "Do not murder." No people ever minded this doctrine ; but he frightened the savages by saying : "If you are cruel, even to beasts and insects, the cruelty will fall upon yourselves ; you shall be the same."'

'Pardon me smiling at your expression, *going to the root of the evil*. This is always said about the management of Ireland. Alas ! the root of the evil lies deeper than the centre of the earth.'

'The surface of Wordsworth's mind—the poetry—has a good deal of staple about it, and will bear handling ; but the inner, the conversational and private, has many coarse, intractable, dangling threads, fit only for the flock-bed equipage of grooms. I praised him more before I knew more

of him, else I never should ; and I might have been unjust to the better part had I remarked the worse sooner. This is a great fault, to which we are all liable, from an erroneous idea of consistency.'

'Infinite as are the pains I take in composing and correcting my imaginary conversations, I may indulge all my idleness in regard to myself. Infinite pains it has always cost me, not to bring together the materials, not to weave the tissue, but to make the folds of my draperies hang becomingly. When I think of writing on any subject I abstain a long while from every kind of reading, lest the theme should haunt me and some of the ideas take the liberty of playing with mine. I do not wish the children of my brain to learn the tricks of others.'

'There are single sentences in the world far out-valuing three or four hundred authors, all entire, as there have been individual men out-valuing many whole nations. Washington, for instance, and Kosciusko, and Hofer, were fairly worth all the other men of their time.'

'I feel I am growing old, for want of somebody to tell me that I am looking as young as ever. Charming falsehood ! *There is a vast deal of vital air in loving words.*'

'I will never write to please the public, but always to instruct and mend it. If Colburn would give me twenty thousand pounds to write *a taking thing*, I would not accept it.'

These are but a few fragments chipped off a great, splendid mind ; yet we can judge of the quality by the specimen. Most true, as the age and posterity will affirm, is the testimony he has given of himself. Landor has never written a line that does not speak to the spirit of man, as with an angel's voice, bidding him come up higher ; though he has selected pagan forms to be the oracles of his wisdom, and shrined his genius in the old marble gods of the past.

The letters of Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer and those of Charles Dickens overflow with humour and radiant, playful brilliancy, though the contrast of the two natures is manifested in every opinion uttered. Dickens evidently looks on

life with the same earnest sadness and grave humour that characterise his works ; while the sparkling, mocking irony of Bulwer is flung recklessly over everything ; one true, sad feeling, however, pervades his letters : '*Primavera per me non è più mai !*' (with me the spring of life is over). The contrast of the two minds is strikingly shown in their opinions upon Italy. Bulwer writes :—

'I freeze in the desolate dulness of Rome, with its prosing antiquaries and insolent slaves. In Venice I found myself on board a ship, viz. in prison, with the chance of being drowned. In Florence I recognised a bad Cheltenham. In Naples I for the first time find my dreams of Italy. What a climate, and what a sea ! I should be in Paradise but for the mosquitoes ; they devour me piecemeal ; they are worse than a bad conscience, and never let me sleep at night.'

Of his Italian tour, Dickens writes :—

'I had great expectations of Venice, but they fell immeasurably short of the wonderful reality. The short time I passed there went by me in a dream. I hardly think it possible to exaggerate its beauties. A thousand and one realisations of the thousand and one nights could scarcely captivate and enchant me more than Venice. . . . Naples disappointed me greatly. If I had not mud I had dust, and though I had un I still had the Lazzaroni ; and they are so ragged, so dirty, so abject, so full of degradation, so sunken and steeped in the hopelessness of better things, that they would make heaven uncomfortable if they ever get there. I did not expect to see a handsome city, but I did expect something better than that long dull line of squalid houses, which stretches from the Chiaja to the Porta Capuana ; and while I was quite prepared for a miserable populace, I had some dim belief that there were bright rags among them, and dancing legs, and shining, sun-browned faces ; whereas the honest truth is, that connected with Naples I have not one solitary recollection. The country round it charmed me. Who can forget Herculaneum and Pompeii ? As to Vesuvius, it burns away in my thoughts, beside the roaring waters of Niagara,

and not a splash of the water extinguishes a spark of the fire ; but there they go on, tumbling and flaming night and day, each in its fullest glory.'

If Bulwer was not satisfied with Italy, he was at all events more than pleased with Ireland, and writes thus :—

'I have been enchanted with the upper Lake of Killarney, and a place called Glengariff ; and I think that I never saw a country where nature more meant to be great. It is thoroughly classical, and will have its day yet. But man must change first.'

In one of Dickens's letters we have an interesting glimpse of his own state of mind while composing those wondrous novels that once enchanted the world. He writes from Milan :—

'I have been beset in many ways ; but I shut myself up for one month, close and tight, over my little Christmas book, "The Chimes." All my affections and passions got twined and knotted up in it, and I became *as haggard as a murderer* long before I wrote the end. When I had done, I fled to Venice, to regain the composure I had lost.'

Again, two years later, when from the ocean-depths of thought a new creation is about to rise, he writes :—

'Vague thoughts of a new book are rife within me just now, and I go wandering about at night into the strangest places, according to my usual propensity at such a time, seeking rest and finding none.'

How completely this description gives one the idea of a man 'possessed,' spirit-driven—a prophet commissioned to utter the life-giving word to men's souls, and finding no rest until he uttered it ! And this is no extravagant expression of the mission of a great writer—one who, like Dickens, could descend even to the very depths of physical wretchedness to show us that God's impress of divinity on man is universal and eternal.

But we might continue stringing epistolary gems *ad infinitum* from the Blessington correspondence. There are letters from that wonderful compound of poetry and politics,

D'Israeli, in which can be traced evidence of both these tendencies, along with the sarcastic contempt, he seemed to cherish for all political parties; and eulogistic letters from the great Wellesley, and friendly ones from the greater Wellington—one of whose wise remarks touching visits of ceremony is worth quoting. He writes: 'There is no time so uselessly employed as by a visitor, and him upon whom the visit is inflicted.' In fact, the ceremonies of Juggernaut are mild to the sacrifices exacted by social ceremonial. There the body only is killed—crushed, and killed at once—but in the meaningless morning visitings of ladies, deliberate murder and patient suicide of souls is perpetrated with remorseless punctuality. 'Time,' says Goethe, 'is a great curse to those who believe that they are born only to kill it.' When will men and women learn the value of our most precious heritage--the golden sands of life?

Sir William Gell and Jekyll are the two correspondents who pour forth best that clever gossip in the French style of a century ago. The latter tells anecdotes pleasantly; as thus: 'We had at the bar a learned person, whose legs and arms were so long as to afford him the title of *Frog Morgan*. In the course of an argument he spoke of our natural enemies, the French; and Erskine, in reply, complimented him on an expression so personally appropriate.'

'A toady of old Lady Cork, whom she half maintains, complained to me of her treatment. "I have," she said, "a very long chin, and the barbarous countess often shakes me by it." It seemed without remedy, as neither the paroxysm nor the chin could be shortened.'

Jekyll's love for London life was so great that he said, if he were compelled to live in the country, he would have the approach to his house paved like the streets of London, and a hackney coach to drive up and down all day long.

An act of kindness towards the memory of 'L. E. L.' gives Dr. Madden the opportunity to introduce a vast deal of most interesting matter concerning the last few fatal months of Mrs. Maclean's life at Cape Coast Castle. Lady Blessington

had commissioned the editor to erect, at her expense, a marble slab over the grave of the unhappy poetess, which up to that time (three years after her death) had remained without a record. Dr. Madden having an official appointment at the time on the West Coast of Africa, became a guest of Mr. Maclean at Cape Coast Castle for some weeks, and thus had ample means of informing himself as to the kind of person with whom 'L. E. L.' had unfortunately united herself, and also could judge of the desolate existence for which she had exchanged the brilliancy of a successful London literary career. No European lady resided at the settlement. The castle was nothing better than a lone dismal fort, near a village of half-caste population. The scenery, 'a wilderness of seared verdure, a jungle and a swamp, realising the very ideal of desolation.' And the husband of the first lyric poetess of England, the Sappho of the age, is described by Dr. Madden as a person whose only intellectual qualification was a study of barometers and thermometers, and whose only taste was for algebraic calculations. 'He spoke contemptuously of literature, and affected scorn, even *loathing*, for poetry and poets. By long privation of the society of educated women previous to his marriage he had become selfish, coarse-minded, cynical, a colonial sybarite, who, when his bouts of revelry were over, devoted himself to theodolites, sextants and quadrants.' Openly he expressed to his wife his contempt for verse-making, and wished to force her to devote her entire time to the performance of the lowest household duties.

Everyone knows what led her into this fatal marriage. Unlike Lady Blessington, she had no *prestige* of rank or wealth to enable her to bear up against social opinion, whether slanderous or true; and, to escape the evils of her position, she rashly, in a fit of terrible desperation, resolved to go through with the marriage then offered to her, at all hazards, even of her life. Her feelings at the time may be judged of by some verses, almost the last she wrote, and which conclude with these mournful stanzas:—

Still is the quiet cloister wanted,
For those who look with weary eye
On life, hath long been disenchanted,
Who have only one wish—to die.

Then were that solemn quiet given,
That life's harsh, feverish dreams deny;
Then might the last prayer rise to heaven,
'My God ! I prithee, let me die !'

The circumstances of her death are also familiar to everyone. On the morning of October 15 she rose early to write letters to some friends in England, by a ship to sail next day. In about an hour she called for a cup of coffee ; and when the attendant brought it to her chamber, 'L. E. L.' lay stretched a corpse upon the floor—she had drunk poison. That same night she was buried, just four months after her ill-omened marriage.

These events are known, but not the secret misery she had endured during those four months, and which she revealed but to *one* person. All her other letters, written to friends and acquaintances, are full of fabled accounts of her happiness. And if the poison-cup was lifted to her lips *intentionally*, we cannot wonder after reading those revelations.

Lady Blessington, in a letter full of startling details, gives the true account of 'L. E. L.'s' position, as she had it herself from the one only person to whom the unhappy Mrs. Maclean confided the misery endured in her African bondage. The letter is here given entire, as every line has interest :—

'Gore House : January 29, 1839.

'My dear Madam,—Indisposition must plead my excuse for not having sooner given you the sad particulars I promised in my last ; when that cause for my silence had subsided, the dangerous illness of Lord Canterbury threw me into such alarm and anxiety, that it is only to-day, when letters from Paris assure me that he is recovering, that I feel equal to the task of writing.

‘Poor dear L. E. L. lost her father, who was a captain in the army, while she was yet a child. He had married the widow of an army agent, a woman not of refined habits, and totally unsuited to him. On his death, his brother, the late Dean of Exeter, interested himself for his nephew and niece, the sole children left by Captain Landon ; and deeming it necessary to remove them from their mother, placed the girl (Poor L. E. L.) at school, and the boy at another. At an unusually early age she manifested the genius for which she afterwards became so deservedly popular. On leaving school, her uncle placed her under the protection of her grandmother, whose *exigence* rendered the life of her gifted grandchild anything but a happy one. Her first practical effusions were published many years ago, and the whole of the sum they produced was appropriated to her grandmother.

‘Soon after, L. E. L. became acquainted with Mr. —, who, charmed with her talents, encouraged their exertion by inserting her poems in a literary journal with all the encomiums they merited. This notice drew the attention of publishers on her, and, alas ! drew also the calumny and hatred of the envious, which ceased not to persecute her through her troubled life, but absolutely drove her from her native land. There was no slander too vile, and no assertion too wicked to heap on the fame of this injured creature. Mr. —, a married man, and the father of a large family, many of whom were older than L. E. L., was said to have been her lover, and it was publicly stated that she had become too intimately connected with him. Those who disbelieved the calumny refrained not from repeating it, until it became a general topic of conversation. Her own sex, fearful of censure, had not courage to defend her, and this highly gifted and sensitive creature, without having committed a single error, found herself a victim to slander. More than one advantageous proposal of marriage was made to her ; but no sooner was this known than anonymous letters were sent to the persons who had wished to wed her, filled with charges against her honour. Some of her suitors, wholly discrediting these

calumnies, but thinking it due to her to refute them, instigated inquiries to trace them to the original source whence they came; not a single proof could be had of even the semblance of guilt, though a thousand were furnished of perfect innocence. Wounded and humiliated, poor L. E. L. refused to wed those who could, however worthy the motive, seem to doubt her honour or instigate inquiry into her conduct, and from year to year dragged on a life of mortification and sorrow. Pride led her to conceal what she suffered, but those who best knew her were aware that for many months sleep could only be obtained by the aid of narcotics, and that violent spasms and frequent attacks of the nerves left her seldom free from acute suffering. The effort to force a gaiety she was far from feeling increased her sufferings, even to the last. The first use she made of the money produced by her writings was to buy an annuity for her grandmother; that grandmother whose acerbity of temper and wearying *exigence* had embittered her home. She then went to reside in Hans Place with some elderly ladies, who kept a school, and here again calumny assailed her. Dr. M., a married man, and father of grown daughters, was now named as her paramour; and though his habits, age, appearance and attachment to his wife ought to have precluded the possibility of attaching credence to so absurd a piece of scandal, poor L. E. L. was again attacked in a manner that nearly sent her to the grave. This last falsehood was invented a little more than four years ago, when some of those who disbelieved the other scandal affected to give credit to this, and stung the sensitive mind of poor L. E. L. almost to madness by their hypocritical conduct. About this time Mr. Maclean became acquainted with her, and after some months proposed for her hand. Wrung to the quick by the slanders heaped on her, she accepted his offer; but he deemed it necessary to return to Cape Coast Castle for a year before the nuptials could be solemnised. He returned at the expiration of that term, renewed his offer, and she—poor dear soul!—informed all her friends, and me amongst the number, of her acceptance

of it, and of her intention of soon leaving England with him. Soon after this Mr. Maclean went to Scotland, and remained there many months, without writing a single line to his betrothed. Her feelings under this treatment you can well imagine. Beset by inquiries from all her friends as to where Mr. Maclean was, when she was to be married, &c. &c., all indicating a strong suspicion that he had heard the reports and would appear no more, a serious illness assailed her, and reduced her to the brink of the grave ; when — wrote and demanded an explanation from Mr. Maclean.

‘He answered that, fearing the climate of Africa might prove fatal to her, he had abandoned the intention of marrying, and felt embarrassed at writing to say so.

‘She, poor soul ! mistook his hesitation and silence for generosity, and wrote to him a letter fraught with affection ; the ill-starred union was again proposed, but on condition that it should be kept a secret even from the friends she was residing with. From the moment of his return from Scotland to that of their departure he was moody, mysterious, and ill-humoured—continually sneering at literary ladies—speaking slightly of her works—and, in short, showing every symptom of a desire to disgust her. Sir — remonstrated with her on his extraordinary mode of proceeding, so did all her friends ; but the die was cast. Her pride shrunk from the notion of again having it said that another marriage was broken off, and she determined not to break with him. Mystery on mystery followed ; no friend or relative of his—though an uncle and aunt were in London—sanctioned the marriage ; nay, more, it is now known that, two days previous to it, he, on being questioned by his uncle, denied positively the fact of his intention to be married.

‘The marriage *was a secret one*, and not avowed until a very few days previous to their sailing for Africa ; he refused to permit her own maid, who had long served her, to accompany her, and it was only at the eleventh hour that he could be induced to permit a strange servant to be her attendant. His conduct on board ship was cold and moody ; for her

broken-hearted —, whom I have seen, told me that the captain of the ship said that Mr. Maclean betrayed the utmost indifference towards her. This indifference continued at Cape Castle, and, what was worse, discontent, ill-humour and reproaches at her ignorance of housekeeping met her every day, until, as she writes to —, her nerves became so agitated that the sound of his voice made her tremble. She was required to do the work of a menial ; her female servant was discharged, and was to sail the day that the hapless L. E. L. died. She has come to England. L. E. L. thus writes to her — : “There are eleven or twelve chambers here empty, I am told, yet Mr. Maclean refuses to let me have one of them for my use, nor will he permit me to enter the bedroom from the hour I leave it, seven in the morning, until he quits it at one in the afternoon. He expects me to cook, wash, and iron ; in short, to do the work of a servant. I never see him till seven in the evening, when he comes to dinner ; and when that is over he plays the violin till ten o’clock, when I go to bed. He says he will never cease correcting me until he has broken my spirit, and complains of my temper, which, you know, was never under heavy trials bad.”

‘This was the last account Mr. — ever received. Judge, then, of his wretchedness.

‘It is now known that Mr. Maclean had formed a *liaison* at Cape Castle with a woman of the country, by whom he had a large family ; such *liaisons* are not considered disreputable there, and the women are treated as wives. This person lived in the castle as its mistress, until the arrival of Mr. Maclean and poor L. E. L., when she was sent off up the country. This woman was the niece of one of the merchants who sat on the inquest. All the servants, with the exception of the man and his wife brought out by L. E. L., were the creatures of the former mistress ; the whole of the female natives detest English women, because the presence of one then banishes them from the society where they are tolerated in their absence.

‘Mr. Maclean admits that indisposition and mental annoyance must have rendered him far from being a kind or agree-

able companion to poor Letitia ; but adds that, had she lived a little longer, she would have found him very different, as he was, when not ill and tormented by various circumstances, which he does not explain, easy and good-tempered to a fault. He says, that never was there so kind or so faultless a being on earth as that poor girl, as he calls her, and that he never knew her value until he had lost her. In fact, his letter seems an answer to charges preferred against him by the departed, and, what is strange, the packet that brought the fatal news brought no letter of recent date for —, though she never missed an opportunity, and they occur rarely, of writing to him. Her letters, all of which have breathed the fondest affection for him, admit that she had little hope of happiness from her stern, cold and morose husband. I have now, my dear madam, given you this sad tale. I have perused all her letters to —, as well as Mr. Maclean's to him. I ought to add that, when they landed in Africa, Mr. Maclean set off, leaving his wife, and proceeded to the castle, to dislodge his mistress and children. The natives were angry and offended at seeing their countrywoman driven from her home.

‘ Believe me, my dear Madam,

‘ Your ladyship's very sincerely,

‘ M. BLESSINGTON.’

This is a mournful tale, but it may be accepted as a perfectly true statement of the sad fate of England's sweetest singer.

GEORGE ELIOT

GEORGE ELIOT was decidedly the most popular of all the female novelists of recent times ; and is still adored, as without rival or equal, by a vast world of fanatical worshippers. Her reputation was world-wide ; and she exacted homage from all the leading men of the day, more, however, by her conversation, which was singularly profound and interesting, than even by her works. She achieved also an unexampled financial success. No other woman, perhaps, of her generation realised forty thousand pounds by writing. And she deserved it, for she strove earnestly to perfect her work, though often in the effort to seem wise she attained only to being dull. Yet '*Romola*' is a great book to add to literature ; sufficient to ensure lasting fame to the author, even had she written nothing else ; but in '*Daniel Deronda*' and several of her later works she enforces her views with rather too much wearisome prolixity and assertive dogmatism. She is determined on teaching, and will interrupt a love-scene with a disquisition on the return of the Jews or the appearance of infusoria under the microscope.

She also abounds in commonplaces, delivered in language of oracular obscurity, as if they were deep truths brought to the surface for the first time, and given to us covered with the hard grit of primitive formations.

'*Middlemarch*' especially exhausts our patience by page after page of pretentious commonplace ; and probably no amount of bribery would induce anyone to read it through a second time.

Middlemarch is a small provincial place, within and around which are located the persons introduced to our notice. Chief of those is the heroine, Miss Brooke—a young lady of birth and fortune, whose head is filled with schemes of social regeneration, to be worked out mainly by improved labourers' dwellings, for which she is always drawing new plans, while teasing her friends incessantly on the subject. A young lady of birth, beauty, and fortune devoting herself to social regeneration might be made a very splendid central figure of a drama ; and we are led to expect great things from the preface, where Santa Theresa—the most gifted of female writers, as well as the holiest of women, whose words glowed with a lofty and spiritual eloquence seldom equalled, and whose life was an incessant manifestation of angelic zeal in the cause of God and for the good of humanity—is presented to us as the type from which Miss Brooke is drawn, but with what miserable result all readers can judge for themselves. The lofty, ideal woman, with the 'soul-hunger' for some great purpose, 'enamoured of intensity and greatness,' 'yearning to sway the destinies of mankind,' which the author tells us she is going to describe, is never manifested by word or deed. Dorothea Brooke is simply a foolish young person, with a brain full of crotchets, but utterly devoid of common sense ; and with her prosy sayings and stupid projects is about the most wearisome creation ever introduced into a novel. Before the volume is half ended she marries an old philosopher, equally prosy, described by a lady friend, with a coarseness not unusual to George Eliot, as 'bad as the wrong physic ; nasty to take, and sure to disagree.'

About this period of the story we get a glimpse of a cousin of the ancient bridegroom, a young man of Polish blood, an artist—poor, clever, and evidently unscrupulous ; and we feel that something may be worked out of him. He may fall in love with the young woman who 'yearns,' or poison the ancient philosopher, who already fears that his young wife may be troublesome while he is writing his great history of the Aryan Myths. But for this faint hope of a passion and a

tragedy no one would have courage to cut the leaves of the second volume. Of the bridegroom, we are told that 'his blood under a microscope was found to be all semicolons and parentheses,' and of the young cousin, that he laughed derisively to himself when he beheld the ill-assorted pair.

The philosophic husband, in fact, only wants a steady good young person to look after his house and comforts and read aloud to him, as his eyes are failing. Yet, even though his blood did run into punctuation, George Eliot need not have made him write love-letters of such ponderous obscurity as the one where he tells Miss Dorothea Brooke of his desire to marry her in adverbs of extraordinary length. 'A consciousness,' he says, 'of need in my own life arose contemporaneously with the possibility of my becoming acquainted with you! and I find in you an eminent fitness to supply that need, connected, I may say, with such activity of the affections as even the preoccupation of a work too special to be abandoned would not uninterruptedly dissimulate.' 'And,' he adds, 'I now felt convinced emphatically of the feelings I had preconceived, thus evoking more decidedly those affections to which I have referred.'

No man of ordinary human nature, and more than average intellect, could indite such jargon, and the author has failed completely in her endeavour to sketch either the man of letters and learning or the woman of lofty aims and high purpose. When De Staël wished to give the world a picture of a woman of genius, passion, and poetry, she drew Corinne, and has made the type immortal; Bulwer, in his *Lady Florence Lascelles*, has perfected the vision he had dreamed of one of the queens of society reigning by sovereign right of beauty, rank, wealth, and brilliant intellect; and Disraeli, when he created 'Theodora,' gave a magnificent illustration to literature of one of those rare and splendid women who can inspire multitudes and sway nations by the powerful and magnetic force of their passionate convictions. But George Eliot has added no new page to the history of what a woman might be, nor has she created a type, except in 'Romola,' to interest and inspire. A whole

infinity separates her heroine, Dorothea Brooke, from the glowing, impassioned, eloquent Santa Theresa, whose words and works can still kindle an answering fire in human hearts, though the shadow of three centuries rests on them.

George Eliot has a keen insight into ordinary human life and commonplace natures ; some humour—a strong trenchant way of describing what lies on a certain low social level, and a sharp, rough power of sarcasm. These are her gifts as a writer, and not without fitness has she assumed a man's name, for she has more of the masculine nature, strong, hard, keen, and somewhat coarse, than of the passionate, glowing, sympathetic woman's intellect. There is a rector's wife in the book who, though described as well-born and bred, utters many of those coarse phrases in which George Eliot's works abound. This lady describes the philosopher as 'a great bladder for dried peas to rattle in ;' she believes in birth and no birth, 'as in game and vermin ;' she says, 'Some people never know vinegar from wine till they have swallowed it and got the colic ;' she calls a gentleman 'pulpy.' However, there is some humour in the description of the philosopher's family arms, 'three cuttle fish, sable, and a commentator rampant.' Celia Brooke is rather amusingly drawn—the young lady who hates energy and emphasis, and wonders how well-bred people can distort their faces by excitement and look like turkey cocks. The uncle, also, Mr. Brooke, is cleverly touched off. The man who has travelled in his youth and met many celebrities, and trifled over every science, and who is ready at any moment to take a mental scamper over all countries and all subjects with the most ready and voluble incoherence—he is described as having 'a glutinously indefinite mind.'

But there is too much exhaustive analysis of all the petty people of the petty town of Middlemarch. Why are we to be bored with the sayings and doings of these very commonplace persons—the mayor and his wife, who was an innkeeper's daughter, and their pseudo-fashionable children, who are ashamed of their mother's English ; the old miser with his horrid lot of relations, each striving for his money ; and the

doctor, and the banker, and the foxhunter, who swears 'By God' on the most trivial occasions, which is very offensive—could not the author make him say 'By Jove!' it is at least harmless—and she is fond of classic allusions? Indeed, there is one passage about Herodotus and Io so very misty that we should require that 'commentator rampant' of whom she speaks to make it intelligible. These provincial people seem in no way connected with the story of the lady who has the 'soul-hunger' for exalted deeds, and it would be well, perhaps, to kill them all right off by a railway smash in the early part of the next volume.

Altogether, 'Middlemarch' is a dull book, without any development of that mystic working of a gifted woman's mind foreshadowed in the preface. Occasionally there are glimpses of that insight into life for which the author has been celebrated, as in the expression of truths like this: 'There is a wonderful frank charm in the intimacy between a man and a woman where there is no passion to hide or to confess.' But these passages of simple truth, expressed in clear, lucid language, are few and far between. George Eliot's style in general has the fatal affectation of being learned. There is an illustration, *à propos* of match-making, taken from vortices, hairlets, water-drops, and infusoria, which has too much of a polytechnic flavour; also, her comparison of the mind of a woman to 'an irregular solid.' Women are very pretty story-tellers, but they are only good writers through sympathy and love. They should know the range of their limited mental powers, and keep within it if they wish to interest. An affectation of learning spoils them, because it is never more than an affectation; no woman is really learned; perhaps she would be very disagreeable if she were so. A logical dogmatic female is detestable. The great charm of the sex is in that light superficiality, which gives sympathy so readily; believes everything through love, and seeks no grounds for belief beyond faith in the one beloved. Our legions of female novelists—and they submerge the land—ought to know that their peculiar mission is to reveal and analyse the working of the heart; in this they may succeed better than men, but they can never expect to vie in power,

knowledge of life, in the eloquence that comes by culture, or the wit that comes by nature, with the more richly endowed and more highly educated sex. Men are perpetually adding names to literature that will last for all time—women never. Amongst the male novelists of the day, this age crowns two at least with immortality—Bulwer and Disraeli—but not one woman, though they write by thousands. Not even George Eliot herself, called by the London critics the greatest female writer of the world, can hope to live beyond the passing moment. The fragrance distilled from the glowing feelings, crushed lives, and perhaps broken hearts of literary women may refresh a few idle hours of man's more earnest life. It is enough—the world asks no more from them than to amuse or soften through sympathy the powerful ruling race for whom woman was created only to be the helpmeet ; but no one can be expected to care much or long for vanished fragrance, a crushed flower, a faded life, or the wrecks of broken hearts, from which most female writers draw their experiences, unless, indeed, the love tales were embalmed in such prose and verse as men only can write, and which women have never equalled.

Why cannot English novelists see the superior force, beauty, and power of the French style of writing, where a line, a word, is made to unfold a character or express a dramatic situation, and the line or word reveals more of both in a sudden flash than all the long-winded descriptive sentences of English writers, with their numerous clauses and concatenations ?

George Eliot has much of this fatal tendency to the insufferably prosy. She is always sermonising in an instructive, parochial way, and giving us her own views, in place of allowing her characters to reveal them by swift, dramatic touches. Nearly all the second volume, for instance, is entirely destitute of incident or scenic effect. It consists simply of a treatise on medical jurisprudence, hard, harsh, and pretentious in style, inspired by a Dr. Lydgate, who seems a pet of the author's, or at least a peg to hang her theories on concerning jurymen, medicines, and medical law. All the

characters talk with a ponderous verbosity in sentences of at least twenty lines long, and of the most involved construction, as if, like those of a legal document, they were to be paid for according to their obscurity and length.

There is also much entomology in this portion of the work, and a great deal about anatomy, with incidental phrases too coarse for quoting ; so that altogether it is wearisome and disagreeable, and does not in the least tend to the development of the plot. The remainder of the volume has more human interest. We are brought to Rome, where Dorothea (the girl of suppressed passions and undirected intellect) and her grave, philosophic husband are passing the honeymoon, but not too happily ; he, still collecting materials for his great work on ancient myths, shut up all day in libraries, writing all the evening ; she, weary, listless, solitary, sauntering through picture-galleries with her maid and a paid guide ; and when at home looking silently and wearily at her husband, walled round by his books and papers, as if on an inaccessible island, far away from her and all her feminine yearnings for love, kind words, and sympathy—for, like all women, Dorothea pined for companionship, for some expressions of gentle, genial interest in her life, pleasures, employments, and pursuits. These would have been more to her than all the picture-galleries in the world ; but the grave, silent man, entrenched within his fortifications of manuscript and books, never dreamed that the poor, etiolated plant outside the circumvallation was dying for want of the sunshine of affection and sympathy. Yet he liked her after a fashion—the cold literary fashion—that is, he required her not to interrupt him by word or caress, and, in return, he sent her off to do Rome with a hired cicerone, and thought he had thus arranged everything necessary for their mutual happiness. He was an excellent man in every respect ; still a suspicion would sometimes rise in his wife's heart that he was withal only a selfish egotist who knew nothing of the needs of a woman's heart. And he, who expected a wife to be a mere passive creature, docile to orders, grateful for small favours, and without any

aim beyond ministering to his comforts and securing to him perfect quiet, was startled and troubled at the least claim she made upon his time or attention. In fact, she was in his way, except when he wanted a listener to whom he could expound his views ; or some one to sort his papers and arrange his notes. Thus, both began to see their illusions of happiness crumbling to dust. Dorothea was often in tears, and her husband looked graver and sterner than ever. In place of the intellectual companion she had expected in a literary husband, she finds that she has wedded only a composing machine whose 'blood runs in semicolons.' And he feels disturbed at the petulance that sometimes rises to her lips, as it interrupts the cohesion of his ideas upon the great subject of the common origin of myths.

It is just at this time that the Polish cousin comes again upon the scene, and the drama begins to be interesting—through the evidently coming conflict of passions and duties. The brilliant, gifted, poetical artist becomes the companion of Dorothea to the studios and picture-galleries, in place of the hired guide, and a new fascination dawns upon her life. 'There is a great charm,' George Eliot has said, 'in the intercourse between a man and woman where there is no passion to conceal or to confess,' but the difficulty is to have the intercourse and intimacy without the passion. Few attain to the philosophical balance, especially when genius lights up and intensifies all words and feelings. We perceive at once that these two—Dorothea and the artist—are falling helplessly into a metaphysical passion of so-called friendship, fed with much æsthetic talk over art and poetry and subtle analysis of feelings. But Dorothea is pure as an angel all the while ; she does not know that there are some people mystically and mysteriously dangerous to others, who exercise an electric influence over their mind and soul, an influence impossible to resist, for it seems the product of some mystic and eternal law of spiritual affinity ; and so she allows this subtle power—call it mesmerism, magnetism, or psychic force—radiated from her companion's presence to enfold her round without

an effort at resistance. The husband—when he lifts his head from his books and his history—has some instincts of jealousy, and his manner becomes more stern and sombre than ever. So the second volume ends, leaving a grand opening for a psychological study of human hearts, and a tragic involvement of human lives to be worked out in the concluding part of the work. George Eliot has a deep and penetrating insight into life. And so we leave the three principal actors in the drama to their fate in her powerful hands. Will she save or slay? Probably the latter, for such tragic involvements seldom end happily. Will the husband, from being only stern, become cruel? Will the lover—brilliant, reckless, loving, daring, passionate, and utterly unscrupulous—exert his fatal influence to the utmost?—and the woman, with all her noble resolves, her sacred, saintly sense of wedded vows, her devotion to the good, the beautiful, and the true—her lofty ideal of life—will she suffer herself to be led to the edge of the precipice whose depth is infinite, while all the time she fancies that her soul is springing forward on a path of light to loftier regions and a diviner life? The flame has been kindled, the spell has been woven, and the magnetic circle is closing around these three related lives; but we leave the reader to study the concluding volume, that will give an answer as to the final result.

DANIEL O'CONNELL

EVERY important movement in history is associated with the name of one great man, the guide, inspirer, leader, and victor in the revolutions that change the destiny of nations.

The masses follow as he directs, act as he orders, and achieve the victory as the result solely of his all-powerful intellect and all-compelling force of will. So the name of O'Connell is for ever associated with Catholic emancipation, for by his will and intellect alone it was gained for the Irish nation ; and the light of all the ages will rest on him while the world endures, as the hero of a great work accomplished for humanity. O'Connell's life truly was a wondrous drama, with Ireland for the theatre and the whole civilised world as spectators ; an apostolate of freedom, which, though limited to his own country and race, yet acted, through sympathy, on the farthest lands ; and finally, it was one long gladiatorial wrestle against oppression and bigotry in which every step was a combat, but every combat a victory.

What the sword was to Napoleon the brain was to O'Connell—both mighty conquerors, one of the outer, the other of the inner world ; one casting down crowns to prepare the reign of democracy, the other overthrowing prejudices to prepare the reign of truth. The life of O'Connell is, indeed, the history of Ireland for nearly a century. Her sufferings, her struggles, and her triumphs are indissolubly connected with his name. He lived through all, incarnated all, and was the avenger, the apostle, and the prophet of her people.

The Clan Conal, from which he descended, was an ancient

and heroic race ; and if pedigree be of value to a man who could ennoble any name, he might trace his line through chiefs, princes, and kings.

The year of his birth, 1775, was announced to the world by the first cannons of American independence ; but on what a land of slaves did his young eyes open !

The penal laws were then in full force. One generation had died in their fetters, another was passing away, and a third springing to manhood, the slaves of this atrocious system, which excluded the whole Roman Catholic nation from every benefit of the constitution. 'It was a machine,' says Burke, speaking of the penal laws, 'of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.'

Although but seven years of age when the glories of Grattan and the Volunteers of '82 thrilled through the country, O'Connell must have been old enough to feel that he belonged to a proscribed and outcast race, who had no right to lift their voice in the triumph which they were too degraded even to assist in achieving.

As he grew older, and the ambitious spirit woke within him with its consciousness of power and instincts of command, can we not fancy how it chafed and fretted with indignant scorn at beholding every avenue to fame, wealth, honour, glory, banned and barred against him by England ? Excluded by law from the university, the bar, the senate, and the army of his own country ; even the facilities of common education denied to him ; even the very ground he trod, descended to his family from a long line of ancestors, was theirs only by the sufferance of some conniving Protestant—what wonder that the Catholic of that day had all the vices of a slave, and only the virtues of a victim ?

All Catholics who could afford it resorted then to the foreign colleges for education, and O'Connell left Ireland for St. Omer's when he was fifteen. There is a letter of the

president's extant, describing the impression made on him by the future world-shaker. He writes—'With respect to the young O'Connell, I have but one word to utter. I never was more mistaken in my life than I shall be if he is not destined to make a remarkable figure in society.'

The French Revolution was then approaching its crisis, and the degraded victim of the penal laws heard the rights of man preached by thirty-five millions of self-emancipated people. The very laws which made him an outcast threw him into the arms of liberty, and thus destiny was working out a just revenge on England. But the horrible excesses of anarchy disguised under the mask of freedom which O'Connell witnessed at the same time, also impressed him forcibly ; and, probably, were influential in making him, throughout his long political career, the earnest undeviating advocate of religion, peace, and order. In '93 he returned to Ireland, a youth of eighteen, with a fine manly person, fluent of speech, with something of a French accent, and a brave, daring, upright, earnest heart. With a strong prescience of his own powers he at once chose the profession which would the soonest bring him into public life and afford him the noblest opportunities for the promotion of his great objects, so he commenced his studies for the bar, a profession of which Catholics had only recently obtained the privilege of becoming members.

The severity of the penal laws had been gradually relaxed by England in consequence of the American example of how a country may retaliate on a government, and concessions continued to be made, not from the dignity of attitude assumed by the Catholics, but from the terror of French progress both in ideas and arms. A century of slavery had, indeed, so debased the Catholic party of that day, that the removal of their fetters gave them only political but no moral freedom, for the iron had entered into their soul. In estimating the value of O'Connell's efforts, we must consider this moral debasement in which he found the Catholic nation when he became their leader, and the fearless self-relying position they attained through his teaching and guidance. It was a period when, as

Keogh describes, 'the Catholic would scarce dare to walk upright and erect as other men, but was marked by a certain timidity of gait and demeanour, when the meanest Protestant that crawled the streets considered himself a divinity compared to him ;' so sunk and abject, that Catholics finally believed in their own inferiority, and when petitioning to obtain the right of voting, admission to the bar and the army, actually abjured the idea of desiring or expecting unlimited and total emancipation. The Catholic aristocracy held aloof from the people, with the cold proud feelings of the old feudal times strong in them, and, in their haughty Jacobinism, disdained to sue for rights to a monarchy whose claims to allegiance they denied. For the most part, therefore, they became voluntary exiles, and attained rapidly those honours and distinctions in foreign lands which were denied them in their own. But while the genius and valour of the Irish nobles were raising other nations to glory, the people of their own sank into a dull lethargy, in which a sullen sense of wrong and desire for revenge without the power were the only living principles. A benumbed torpidity, like that which follows from protracted torture ; a frozen deadly stillness, in which no generous emotion, no passionate enthusiasm could exist. A state like that *lowest hell*, described by Dante, as of *ice*.

So long had they been outcasts from the constitution and the privileges of education, that they were finally denied the rights of gentlemen ; and the descendant of some Protestant base-born adventurer shuddered at familiar intercourse with the proscribed race as much as a European might at contact with a negro. The admission of the Catholic into society was tabooed ; and while a foreign faction usurped his birth-right in his own land, there was scarcely left to him even the name of Irishman. Well might the victim of the penal laws exclaim—'The wretched have no country. That dear name comprises home, kind kindred, fostering friends, protecting laws—all that binds man to man. But none of these are mine ; I have no country.'¹

¹ Maturin's *Bertram*.

Thus O'Connell found Ireland at the commencement of his career, bound between apathy and brutal fanaticism. But he at once placed himself at the head of *the people*, and elevated them to a sense of their own value, power, numerical influence, and dignity of position, as the true Irish *nation*. He raised them to such a preponderating force as a political engine that all minor parties and timid cliques were constrained to join the mighty march of the masses or be trampled beneath their feet. He cast down the pride of the cold, supercilious Catholic aristocracy, by showing them that not their isolated attempts, but the organised strength of the people, alone could break their fetters. He then engaged the Catholic priesthood by interest and affection to join the movement openly ; and so for the first time, Ireland beheld all forces combined into one overwhelming mass, whose voice, united and firm, no government could resist—the voice of the leagued aristocracy, priesthood, and people, against English insolence, tyranny, and oppression.

Keogh, the predecessor of O'Connell—and, as far as his light and ability went, a consistent worker for Catholic freedom—was content with abject petitions for the repeal of the penal laws, but was too timid to extend his views or desires further. He never had the daring to stand on equal ground with Protestants, and trembled to evoke a nation to his aid. This tremendous engine in modern social revolutions—the majestic force of a resolute, organised people was unknown to him. O'Connell first discovered and then proved its efficacy : and so, while Keogh and his colleagues toiled in their committees and uttered their supplications in so feeble a voice that Ireland could not hear, and England despised them, the mass of the people in their blind efforts to find the path to freedom for themselves formed secret associations, with only revenge for their counsellor and ignorance for their leader. This preparation, or rather this chaotic tendency, made them willing instruments of the Revolution of '98.

Although this rebellion was wholly a Protestant movement and its object a Republic, the Catholics joined it because they

were promised freedom by so doing, but otherwise appear to have taken no interest in the projects of the leaders. The priesthood as a body was violently opposed to the movement ; France had too lately trampled on the cross with the crown for them to peril religion by a similar demonstration in Ireland. Besides, the effect of the penal laws on Catholics was not to turn them into Republicans, but rather to make them cling with something of a chivalrous devotion to the memory of that Stuart race who had lost a kingdom by attachment to their faith, and at all times there is a much stronger affinity between Protestantism and the Republican form of government than between the Catholic and Republicanism.

Even now, when democratic and republican teaching is permeating every corner of the world, and in England the entire of the trading and working classes is deeply imbued with its spirit and determined to carry out its doctrines, the subject excites little sympathy amongst the Irish masses. There is so deep a principle of veneration in the Celtic Irish character, that it is perpetually tending to slavish submission ; even to idol-worship.

In short, they are genuine hero-worshippers ; thus they nearly elevated Father Mathew to a god and O'Connell to a king ; and if a Republic should ever be established here as the most fitting form of Irish government, the people will vainly try to enlarge their hearts into a pantheon for the whole Executive Government—their idolatry always taking the monotheistic form ; and the President, whoever that fortunate man may be, if he once possesses the affections of the people, will find much difficulty in escaping the permanent honours of Royalty from their devoted hands.

It was through their affections, far more than their interests, that O'Connell attained such imperial sway. Anyone who attended a crowded meeting where O'Connell presided, could not fail to be struck with wonder at the mass of human faces all upturned to him in almost religious adoration ; these rude and rugged countenances, furrowed by toil and want and suffering, or with the savage instincts yet untamed by

any civilisation, distinctly marked ; ready to avenge an insult by a murder, yet all bent on him with childlike faith and trust and love, believing everything he uttered, and believing even the impossible possible because he uttered it. It was thus by concentrating all affections that O'Connell combined all parties; directed unopposed all forces, and brought them to bear with tremendous, united, crushing power, upon the barriers which exclude the people from the constitution.

O'Connell never in any manner countenanced the revolutionary efforts of '98. On the contrary, we find him then in the Lawyers' Corps, helping to keep the country for his Majesty. Indeed, at no period of his life was he remarkable for Republican tendencies, but rather was distinguished for deference to rank, and a courteous admission of those privileges usually conceded to persons in authority, but above all for an unswerving determination to uphold order, even at the sacrifice of rights.

He was called to the bar in the year 1798, and during that stormy period devoted himself to intense study of his profession, rising at four o'clock of a winter's morning to light his own fire, that he might commence his studies. This intense application was one cause of his subsequent great success, for perfect knowledge of a subject at once commands the attention of an audience. He knew well that talent and genius are but the rough material given by Nature—of no value to the world until they take a definite form, and incarnate themselves in some visible, tangible shape, either of beauty or utility ; and for this there must be heart-crushing, and brain-sweat, and days of solitude and nights of toil, and mind and body must be taxed to the uttermost, before the rude marble of Paros can rise into the majesty of the Parthenon.

His immediate success at the bar was unexampled, for, besides perfect knowledge always of his subject and of his audience, he had tact, wit, sarcasm, humour, irony, a great memory, and the courage and self-possession of conscious power. Every case in which he was named counsel was considered gained. Jurors could not resist his persuasions, counsel his arguments,

nor judges his bold, unflinching daring, though but too often ermined dogmatism, from its high places, strove to put down the popular advocate by intimidation. At one trial he argued clearly a disputed point, but the court ruled against him. Next day the judge announced that he had discovered Mr. O'Connell was right. 'Good God ! my lord,' he exclaimed, 'if your lordship had known as much law yesterday morning as you do this, what an idle sacrifice of time and trouble you might have saved me.' On another occasion he offered some advice to a witness. 'Have you a *brief* in this case, Mr. O'Connell ?' inquired the judge, with peculiar emphasis. 'No, my lord,' he replied, 'but I *will* have one when the case goes to the assizes.' 'When *I*,' rejoined the judge, throwing himself back with an air of lofty scorn, 'was at the bar it was not my habit to anticipate briefs.' 'When *you* were at the bar,' retorted O'Connell, 'I never chose *you* for a model ; and, now that you are on the bench, I will not submit to your dictation.'

His professional emolument reached finally to 10,000*l.* a year, when he threw it all up to devote himself wholly to the people, and his private fortune after he succeeded to Darrynane amounted to 4,000*l.* a year ; so that it is absurd in the highest degree to suppose that a man of 14,000*l.* a year could have been influenced in establishing a political agitation by the mere desire of pecuniary benefit.

In 1800 O'Connell first came forward in political life by a speech against the Union. The Catholics in general made no opposition to the passing of this measure, but rather give it a tacit assent ; for Pitt promised concessions to them from the Imperial Parliament of those rights which the Protestant Irish Parliament denied them. Such a bribe was not to be resisted ; indeed, when Protestants chose to sell their own Parliament it is not wonderful that Catholics, who derived no benefit from its enactments, should care little for its continuance, compared with the prospect of obtaining their freedom.

But Pitt deceived and betrayed them ; and though the Union was effected Emancipation was as far as ever.

It is singular that O'Connell's first and latest efforts were *anti-union*. In this, his maiden speech, he declared that he would prefer even to have the penal laws re-enacted sooner than give his consent to the annihilation of our native Parliament. From the moment of his entrance into public life he became the soul of the Catholic party.

He was then twenty-five, with a fine, tall, manly, athletic figure, and a noble, commanding air, with considerable dignity about the carriage and movements of the head and shoulders. Amongst ten thousand a stranger's eye would at once have fixed on him as the true king. Even to the last he retained this majesty of bearing. In his intelligent, expressive face, feeling, passion, and quick emotion were more evident than great intellect. The most striking characteristic of the countenance was the excessive beauty and whiteness of the forehead. It was delicately formed, too, rather broad than high, with no demagogical lowering preponderance over the eyebrows. It was the forehead of a poet much more than that of a logician. His eyes were chameleon; thoughtful or animated, or sparkling with wit and humour, according as the spirit moved him. Yet, sometimes, particularly at crowded assemblies or meetings on which some destiny was depending, there was a dream-like, visionary, far-seeing stillness about them, as if he were looking onwards from the present into futurity; but the two natures of which each individual character is composed were united in the mouth—the passionate and the powerful, the poet and the gladiator. Its form was true Celtic; the long upper lip denoting genius, and the flexibility of muscle which shows a predestination for eloquence. Every emotion, from tenderness to the bitterest sarcasm, this mouth could portray, but the habitual expression was one of calm and dignified mildness. Then, when those lips parted, what exquisite modulations poured forth from them. Never, perhaps, since sirens gave up sitting and singing upon rocks, did such witch-music fall on the ear of listener. The effect was magical—it acted like some potent spell; Paracelsus never devised a greater. Men were charmed, subdued, enchanted—forgot

everything but him, and could not choose but listen, love him, and swear to do or die for him.

In the early part of O'Connell's career, his oratory was highly finished, and often elaborately perfect, although he never wrote his speeches previous to delivery ; but latterly he seemed to disdain all massive phrases, and gave his ideas in the briefest, simplest form, apparently quite careless of the language in which they were conveyed—conscious that any words were powerful, not from their own value, but because he uttered them. He was often rude and coarse, when bold rough words suited his purpose, for he could fight with all weapons, from a boomerang to a jewelled bodkin. But this very rudeness was often necessary to his success, and employed upon principle.

Think of the fawning, crouching, servile habits he had to conquer in his countrymen, the growth of a century of serfdom, by accustoming them to fight the oppressing dominant faction with their own weapons. True, he sometimes rudely tore the trappings and the stars from official villany and coronetted corruption, but it was to show the people who were the men who dared to trample on them. For example, the superb insolence of his speech in 'Magee's' case is unsurpassable for withering scorn and keen cutting sarcasm, which never descends to use the war-club of invective, but kills with a stroke like the electric fluid, as terrible, as impalpable, and as deadly. This very daring was a triumph, although the cause sustained a defeat. Each individual Catholic felt that he was elevated by his leader's courage, and ennobled by the lofty independence of this man who knew no fear.

O'Connell's powerful style, the strength with which he wrestled with an argument, and hurled defiance or extorted conviction, the athletic suppleness of his combats with men and ideas, remind one of Luther's 'strong smiting words that cleave into the very heart of a matter;' and of him also is true what Jean Paul said of the monk of Eisleben, 'his speech was a combat : few deeds ever equalled his words.' He had much, too, of the *éloquence foudroyante* of Mirabeau, and of

that haughty impatience of opposition which made the French orator exclaim of his opponents, 'When right I argue : when wrong *I crush them* ;' something also of the tempestuous energy of Danton, when his words like a rush of armed men swept all obstacles before them ; but he had the eloquence of Mirabeau without his egoism, and the energy of Danton without his fierce recklessness of means.

Yet while O'Connell raised the passions of his hearers to enthusiasm, to delirium, he himself never seemed under the influence of passion as the exciting cause of eloquence. He evidently stood far beyond that tempest region in the serene heights of calm conviction. One other Irish orator possessed this serene calm while swaying the feelings of a multitude, as a moon to the ocean of their passions, and that was Father Mathew.

From the commencement to the close of O'Connell's life he consistently maintained the same mode of warfare with England—fighting within the lines of the constitution, never outside them—and the grand forces he employed were organisation, combination, union. Then, as Sheil said, 'the Catholics of Ireland stood up in a solid square, and the tramp of six millions of men was heard afar off.' At the same time he affected gratitude for no concessions, but boldly and openly before God and man *demand*ed those rights which God had bestowed and human reason consecrated, by one word—*justice*. But so difficult a task was this organisation, that in 1805, when the first petition of Catholic claims was presented to Parliament, much fear was entertained that a sufficient number of signatures could not be procured ; yet O'Connell 'was never weary when others fainted—never stopped when others fell.' Even after twenty years of unceasing labour to elevate and organise the people, to make them self-reliant, morally courageous, with a sense of their own dignity and rights as a *nation*, he could scarcely obtain forty members for the first meeting of the Catholic Association, the same that afterwards achieved EMANCIPATION. It was founded in 1823, and O'Connell describes himself as standing upon Carlisle

Bridge to kidnap, as it were, wavering men, and weak men, and induce them to join the meeting. Yet these unpromising efforts were so successful, that in one year the 'rent' had reached 1,000*l.* a week, and after the Clare election in '28 it amounted to the enormous sum of 2,000*l.* a week.

Modern revolutions have been accomplished in a few weeks, or even a few days, by the brave heroes of a barricade with nothing but their stout arms and fearless hearts to aid them ; but O'Connell toiled for *thirty* years before he could attain his object.

He commenced the work in the prime, and vigour, and first enthusiasm of twenty-five ; but the yellow had gained upon the green of life before he triumphed.

He was fifty-four ere he could lift his head to Heaven as a free man in his own land. However, the intervening period was not spent in idle declamation. It was a period of moral training and of steady progression ; it was a probation necessary to make the slave of 1800 worthy to be the freeman of '29. Every step of O'Connell's career was an advance, and every advance a permanent possession, for rights demanded by the firm and fearless voice of a united people and enforced by the array of their majestic strength can never be resisted nor revoked. O'Connell found a vast amount of quick excitable feeling, a burning, intense sense of wrong pervading the Catholic body ; but these feelings, undirected, uncombined, only corroded hearts, but broke no fetters. They were rapidly changing the free, open, generous Irish nature into a false, malignant, cruel, revengeful national character, and no great deeds can spring from such elements. He could easily have directed all this wild power into a war of independence, but the people had not yet reached to that state of organisation and moral training which would have rendered defeat *impossible*. Strong but blind, like Samson, they might indeed easily have hurled down the edifice of English supremacy and crushed their tyrants, but they themselves would have perished in the ruins. His clear intellect saw at once that the only revolu-

tionary forces fitted for that time were reason and common sense.

He combated tyranny by public opinion, and, to make this public opinion effective, he toiled to amass its force in organised associations ; there the collected will, the concentrated volition of individual minds was piled up into a tremendous galvanic battery, whose aggregate power nothing could resist.

His first efforts were thus directed towards making the degraded Catholics feel their own dignity—their own equal position before God and man with the dominating faction. He broke the moral fetters by teaching them clearly their *rights*, and placed their petitions for freedom on the higher ground of a demand for justice, rather than as a favour to be sued for from a government. At the same time, while awakening them to a consciousness of their power, he aroused in the people a moral energy sufficient amid the highest exaltations of patriotism to control their passions and enable them to fulfil their duties.

During the thirty years' war of Catholic independence, every means were tried to silence him but in vain. Each shallow government fancied they could stifle the cry for freedom by placing the hand of the police upon the mouth of the country ! Each ministry in turn thought itself strong to crush him either by bribes or persecution : but all failed ; he made each in turn subservient to his purpose, then flung them aside in disdain when they had accomplished it ; flattering them sometimes, because he knew all were corrupt—despising them at all times, because none were sincere. So the great game was played out for thirty years—the policy of England being to treat Ireland like a salad, with oil and vinegar—alternate coaxing and coercion—and O'Connell's to take all they gave, and laugh at all they threatened. His thorough knowledge of human nature, profound judgment, his sagacity, *clairvoyance* of the future, guiding him like a Providence. Seldom indeed was he known to fail even on minor points. His life was a triumph over every government, without producing anarchy :

and he overthrew all laws that stood in his path without violating one. That he was the first statesman of his age is proved by his success. The man who could rule the English Cabinet—the mere Irish Catholic barrister—from his arm-chair at Derrynane, without ever resorting to or inculcating one act of violence to terrify it into submission, must have had an intellect so great that we can only comprehend it partially by studying some of its effects, and finding that, as he had no equal, so he left no successor. True, the path he trod was often tortuous. Noble, sensitive, poetical minds would sometimes prefer failure to success by such means as statesmen *must* employ. These poet minds would rule well in some Utopia where all were as pure and noble as themselves ; but in this wicked world of ours, falsehood, cunning and malignity are the arms generally selected by the opponents of right, and against these, poetic virtues are no adequate defence. Nothing can be more attractive than the theory of politics to a sublime, elevated mind, for it is the science of human happiness ; but the practical working out of details may be often revolting.

O'Connell, however, seized every weapon that came in his way, with the audacity of conscious force, and trod down fearlessly all opposition, all the old miserable cant that the nation would be ruined if Catholics were admitted to political and social equality with the Protestants of the Empire.

It is not, therefore, wonderful that the Irish people finally believed in him with a faith that became almost part of their religion, and loved him with an affection that was almost idolatrous. Yet this mighty power which ruled Ireland, controlled England, and influenced Europe, was not exercised to aggrandise himself ; for who doubts but that the English Ministry would gladly have purchased his silence at any price, or that he could have raised himself to any elevation if he had possessed the ambition, as he had the genius and the daring, of a Wallenstein ? But in O'Connell there was no petty egotism, that would sell his country for a title and a ribbon, like the traitors of 1800 or the inexorable ambition that would break hearts to pave his path to power. And so he who could easily

have become in reality the crowned monarch at Tara, was content to die, as he had lived, only the tribune of the people.

Shiel, who had been his co-worker through all the Emancipation struggle—the winged Ariel of the mighty Prospero—yet with all his brilliant genius could never contest the leadership with him. There was too much egotism in Shiel's nature. His struggles for Emancipation were sincere—for they were to emancipate himself ; but, that once gained, he forgot that he had a country, and self-aggrandisement seemed thenceforth the passion of his life and the motive of his actions.

When the victory of Emancipation had been gained, that splendid moment of O'Connell's career, the war of Repeal began ; but, though O'Connell's personal influence and power increased every year, he never could awaken the same all-conquering enthusiasm for Repeal as for Emancipation. The Act of '29 was a positive, tangible good. Every Catholic felt its influence the moment it became law. But Repeal is not a positive good—only a means to it. It does not give good laws—only offers a better chance of having them passed. It may effect all we wish ; but still it is only a captivating hypothesis. In fact, it is but a word which, indeed, conveys definite ideas of advance and improvement to the politician and the philosopher, but nothing practical by which the senses of the people can be excited. A Republic, on the contrary, is an object which could easily enlist the passions of the lower classes ; for the attainment of everything for which they strive is necessarily included in the word. Not only in theory does it offer the best chance of prosperity and liberty, but certain great benefits must instantly fall to the lot of the people the moment it becomes the government of the country, such as diminution of taxes by the abolition of an expensive royalty, equal rights to the soil of the country by the abolition of primogeniture, and the rights of the people guaranteed by their having a voice in the legislature. These are advantages which a Republic necessarily brings with it, and, consequently, it is an object which above all others awakens a permanent

and well-grounded enthusiasm, and justifies the most strenuous efforts of the people to obtain. But the Irish people were then quite unfitted for the heroic virtues which a Republic demands. They knew nothing of governments but their tyranny—of justice but its violation—of law but its relentlessness. A people whose rulers had made them thus debased, degraded, and ignorant, were as inadequate to the duties of self-government as the poor slaves who first leapt from their chains in the emancipated colonies. O'Connell, therefore, acted with consummate wisdom in not placing complete independence before their eyes as the object to be gained: for, without a high sense of duty, and the heroism of mutual forbearance—a virtue then unknown to the contending parties in Ireland—no independent government of stability and order could exist. Even a native Parliament, had it been restored at that time, would have produced no benefit to the nation, for the Catholics were not then either strong enough or organised enough to make their voice feared and respected; consequently the parliament would have fallen again into the power of the same faction who had previously sold it to England.

In order, therefore, to make the Repeal of the Union possible yet gradual in its attainment, O'Connell year after year fought for the attainment of *minor* measures, which, when passed, gave real visible advantages to the national party; thus foot by foot gaining higher ground for the people, and, according as he elevated, training them in the duties necessary for their higher and more influential position. These minor measures were in fact the real attraction which induced the people to follow him in the onward path to Repeal; and while thus strengthening the national party, O'Connell knew he was in the same proportion bringing the grand ultimate measure every year more within the limits of possibility; for in politics as in literature, Goethe's advice is admirable, 'Aim at the highest, but begin at the lowest.'

His moral-force agitation was a mighty ocean perpetually heaving and dashing, and making fresh inroads upon the firm rocks of prejudice and bigotry, whirling into its vortex whatever

stately vessel or tiny craft of a measure was put forth by Ministers, absorbing its riches and then casting back the dismantled hulk to the despairing launchers. He knew that Irish independence could never be achieved by epileptic fits of mad ferocity, and through his consummate leadership he gained all for which he combated 'without the stain of a single crime resting on the national cause.'

Many books have been written upon O'Connell, but mere historical details of his life can give no adequate idea of his infinite humour ; his wit, equal to Talleyrand's ; and the singular magnetism of his voice and presence, which made him rule as a despot over people, county and political parties by the right divine of innate, conscious force which crushed all opposition and dominated all minds that came under his personal influence. There was also in his nature a genial, broad human-heartedness in which there was much to be loved and honoured, especially in the domestic relations of life that surrounded him. Of this quality many instances can be gathered from the O'Connell correspondence—a work of great interest, recently published by the eminent writer, W. J. Fitzpatrick, F.S.A., to whom Irish biography is already deeply indebted. An important volume by Mr. Fagan, M.P., brings down the history of the Liberator to the year 1829, the epoch that crowned his life with victory. O'Neil Daunt takes it up at that date in a volume entitled 'Personal Recollections,' abounding in clever stories and sayings, traits of character and personal demeanour, and anecdotes of O'Connell's wit and wisdom, during all the fluctuations of the Repeal warfare, with its many exciting episodes, from the crowning at Tara to the prison cell at Richmond, down to the sad but stately closing scene at Genoa.

Very mournful are the details of O'Connell's later years, when life was but a slow death ; and an infinite, wordless melancholy fell upon his spirit, from the consciousness of failing power, and the wasting away of that splendid brain whose every thought had been for Ireland.

Yet there is also something very pathetic in the last scenes of O'Connell's life. Like some altar of an ancient faith which,

though the sanctuary fire has long been extinguished, men yet reverence for its traditions of glory, so the proudest bent in homage, and the noblest vied in showing honour to the dying tribune, majestic though in ruins, whose strength had been in his 'words of truth,' whose dominion was in the hearts of the people, and whose reward was the imperishable homage of a world. The very lands he trod were destined a few months after his death to be strewn with fallen crowns and broken sceptres, but the glory that rests on the brow of him who fought and suffered to elevate a degraded and despairing people will never be effaced, for the light is consecrated to immortality on the page of history and in the heart of an emancipated nation.

THE RIGHT REVEREND DR. DOYLE

‘THE Life and Labours of Bishop Doyle’ is one of the most interesting of the many biographies of Irish celebrities contributed by Mr. J. Fitzpatrick, the popular author, to Irish history during recent years. For Bishop Doyle and O’Connell were the great central figures of the Emancipation era, and equally powerful, though their tactics were different. O’Connell’s rallying cry was ‘Agitate!’ Dr. Doyle’s was ‘Educate!’ O’Connell held the passions of the people like a thunderbolt in his hand, ready to hurl against oppression; but the Bishop swayed the intellect of the nation, and brought over to the side of freedom not only the leading men of highest influence in Ireland, but finally the English Senate and the English Ministry. Besides his rare gifts of learning and intellect, he had the warmest zeal for the right and the true; and his teaching, full of the noblest influences, was enforced by a splendour of eloquence unsurpassed even in Ireland, that land of orators.

He was born under the Penal Laws, and suffered keenly from all the bitterness of the degradation. No education at home being then possible to a Catholic, he went for some years to the great College of Coimbra, in Portugal, and on his return speedily became famous. He was appointed Professor of Theology at the Carlow College, afterwards of Rhetoric, and finally, when scarcely more than thirty, was elected to the Bishopric of Kildare and Loughlin.

The country was then (1827) in a fever of excitement over the Catholic claims. A petition signed by three millions of

Catholics had been ignominiously rejected by England, and as an answer from the Government, three million rounds of cartridges were ordered to Ireland.

Then it was the young Bishop threw himself heart and soul into the movement, and the series of those wonderful political addresses began to appear that electrified the nation by their force and fire, and at last extorted the attention of Ministers, who finally consented to argue the question seriously, and Dr. Doyle was summoned over to give evidence before the House of Lords. It was a trying moment for the priest of the pariah race, and at first he was anxious and nervous, knowing that a strong army of the enemies to his creed and people were well fortified with questions to torture and confute him ; while on their side an easy victory was expected. But they soon found in the young Irish Bishop an antagonist who was their master. At times when their Lordships put questions showing absurd ignorance of Irish matters, he set the matter in another form, helping them to some degree of sense ; and this with the most perfect courtesy and grace.

Some one asked the Duke of Wellington, who was going in and out of the House, ' Well, are they examining Doyle ? '

' No,' replied the Duke with a grim smile, ' it is Doyle who is examining us.'

His triumph in London was complete. Everyone spoke of him with respect and admiration, and from that time the success of Emancipation was assured. The Duke sent over a draft of the Bill for his approval, and finally, though the King nearly died of alarm, and had to be coerced into giving his assent, the measure became law in 1829, and the bondage of centuries was broken.

The important aid given by the Bishop was fully acknowledged, and amongst other testimonies, he received from the Duke of Sussex a copy of his own speech on the question, richly bound, and inscribed to him in letters of gold.

It is sad to find how brief was the career begun so nobly. He survived this great victory only six years ; and, after the excitement of the Emancipation struggle was over, we hear of

him complaining constantly of a terrible lassitude that had fallen upon him.

Still he worked, and wrote, and organised ; rising at five in the mornings, and allowing no moment for selfish ease. The acts of violence practised by the illegal societies at that time filled him with horror, and his addresses to the people overflowed with pathetic entreaties and vehement condemnation of their vain and wicked strivings against law. 'Wicked,' he said, 'because all crime confirms the power of the oppressor ; and vain, because the efforts of a disorganised rabble can never achieve success.'

'And who are these,' he asks, 'who would subvert the laws of the country by violence? Men without education, without money, without arms, without counsel, without a leader, without discipline ; kept together by a bond of iniquity which it is a duty to violate, a crime to observe. Men destitute of religion, with blasphemy in their mouths and their hands filled with rapine and blood. Can such as these regenerate a country, and make her free and happy ?'

One deeply touching scene is recorded when he addressed an immense crowd of the kneeling and weeping people, leaning for support upon his crosier, for he was weak and faint ; but the majesty of his presence, and the gleaming eyes that lit up the pale, worn face, inspired such awe that groans and sobs were heard on all sides.

'Remember,' he said, 'that revenge is God's alone. Let this truth sink deep in your souls. Tell it to your children in your huts and cabins ; and, if turned forth to starve and die, tell it amid the darkness of the night, in the storm and rain, in your hunger and raggedness, still ever, ever repeat, "Revenge is God's alone."'

Wasted with anxiety, and already standing within the shadow of death, it was sublime to see him thus warring and striving against the moral degradation of the people. Once, when some terrible acts of cruelty came to his notice, he fell into a profound melancholy that lasted for days.

‘These savages!’ he exclaimed; ‘they are not fit for liberty!’

But he knew well, also, that the mere act of emancipation could not all at once redeem the soul of a people that had been degraded for centuries through ignorance and oppression. To raise them by education to the level of civilised men was the dream and passion of his life, and for this he laboured unceasingly. He likened the youth of the nation to a captive in prison, incapable almost of counting by notches the days of his captivity. His aim was to teach them their rights as men, and their duty to their country, to enrich her by the products of labour and art. Up to that time there was only the hedge-school for the children of the people. The priest was a hunted outlaw, and their only temple of worship some wretched cabin hid in a bog.

By his exertions schools were founded in every parish, and chapels for worship rose in every district in his diocese. The splendid cathedrals also of Dublin and Carlow owe their origin to him. He endeavoured likewise to found a national institute for teaching science, history, and all that concerned their own country, to the people. No man had ever nobler aims, or uttered nobler words to a nation. And how pathetically he pleads for Ireland—‘always unhappy, always oppressed, reviled when she complains, persecuted when she struggles; her evils suffered to corrode her, her wrongs never to be redressed.’

And he continues, with his passionate Irish eloquence:

‘Her pastures teem with milk; her fields are covered with bread; her flocks are numerous as the bees in a hive; her ports are safe and spacious; her rivers deep and navigable; her inhabitants are brave and intelligent as any people in the world. Nature seems to have intended her as the emporium of wealth, the mart of universal commerce; yet her children are the most wretched of any civilised people on the face of the globe!’

Such words plead like tears, and there was a vital force in them that stirred the hearts of his hearers even beyond the

harmonies of the eloquence. Yet with all the splendour of his fame and acknowledged power over the nation, there was in his life entire humility and self-abnegation. He cared for no pomp, and would not even use a carriage, though one was given to him. Frugal as an anchorite as regarded his own ease and pleasure, yet to his guests a prince in dignity and hospitality.

Speaking of himself, he said :

‘I am a Churchman, but without ambition ; a Catholic, but without bigotry ; an Irishman hating with my whole soul the oppression of my country, but my desire is to heal her wounds, not to aggravate her sufferings. What I desire above all is her freedom, and the union of her people. I would free religion from the slavery to the State, and let the ministers receive their hire from those for whom they labour.’

But one must study the whole life-work of this remarkable man to comprehend fully the wise and far-seeing policy of his national teaching. His great eloquence added much to his influence over the people ; it was both logical and impassioned. Cobbett named him as the best writer in the English language ; and Montalembert noticed the elegance of his manners, and his perfect style of expression. His appearance also inspired deference and respect : of lofty stature and impressive dignity of bearing, with a noble head, high brow, and large hazel eyes, he was the true type of a leader of men.

The abject, servile demeanour of the people, the result of generations of oppression, pained him deeply ; and using all his influence as a Bishop he sedulously watched over the instruction and manners of the priesthood, teaching them to know their own value and the nobility of their office. Thus by every means he strove to make the down-trodden serfs worthy of freedom, and to give them dignity, self-reliance, and a proper pride in their country.

The last scenes of this noble life, devoted so earnestly to the service of humanity, are deeply pathetic. The lassitude of which he complained increased day by day, the tall figure

wasted to a fleshless form, and the large eyes lit up a face already pale as the dead. Still he worked on, the soul never weary, the fortitude unshaken, the intellect clear to the last. He was then but forty-seven, and in the very prime of mental power, when they told him that the death-hour was certain and was approaching. So young to leave his work, and so much work to be done, there was the sadness of it. But his calm dignity never forsook him. He made his will. It consisted of but two lines :—‘All things that I possess came to me from the Church ; to the Church and to the poor I leave all.’

Then, by his desire, he was lifted to the window, once more to look on the last glories of a June morning ; and so he passed to death, leaving a name to be for ever honoured in Irish history, and the memory of one of the noblest workers that ever toiled and strove for political freedom and the moral and intellectual elevation of a people.

LORD LYTTON.

IT is a relief to turn from the heavily-weighted sentences of George Eliot, to the work of a perfectly trained artist in expression like Lord Lytton. But his latest work, 'Kenelm Chillingley,' appeals to us with even a stronger feeling than admiration, as the last utterance of one of the most brilliant intellects of the age ; and a sense of vain regret is felt that lips so eloquent, a heart that vibrated rhythmically with all the highest aspirations of the soul, should be stilled for ever more on earth. If destiny would but leave the gifted to us a little longer than the brief miserable span awarded to human life, and be content with a yearly holocaust of the stupid ! Commonplace souls are so plentiful and could so easily be replaced by millions as dull and idealess—but nature never repeats a great intellect. No successor by right divine of equal powers ever ascends the throne left vacant by the kings of mind. Great genius, in whatever peculiar form it may be incarnated, is manifested but once, like the apparition of those mysterious comets in space whose orbit is so vast that probably, while this mundane scheme continues, they will never again cross the earthly field of vision. Genius comes like the avatar of a god—a revelation to humanity of what is possible to the human ; writes its signature on the world in immortal characters, and returns to the spiritland from whence it came. Earth waits and watches through the centuries, but no second Homer, nor Æschylus, or Dante, or Shakespeare, or Raffaele, or Michael Angelo appears ; and probably never again will be given to the world that peculiar combination of great mental

gifts, that richly endowed organisation, with its spiritual insight and passionate eloquence, from which emanated the series of splendid and thoughtful works, from 'Pelham' to 'Zanoni,' and from 'Zanoni' unto this last.

'Kenelm Chillingley' combines all the characteristics of Lord Lytton's genius in an eminent degree, and is filled to overflowing with epigram, genial humour, and polished sarcasm ; profound reflections over life, and lofty aspirations towards the highest good, with mocking aphorisms that show the hollowness of modern social life, and satire keen and flashing as the spear of Ithuriel when shams and falsehood are to be unmasked. Every thought is philosophy, every word is gold. It is a work to be read and re-read, studied, appropriated, assimilated till the deep truths it inculcates become part of the inner life, bringing forth much fruit. The language alone is a study for all writers in this degenerate age of fast slang and fashionable *argot*. Without effort, the words gather and group themselves into harmonious forms, as if at the impulse of some hidden music. All the graces of classical style, the riches of modern culture, and the glowing passion which genius alone possesses and radiates, are found united in the wonderful golden flow of Lord Lytton's eloquence. The English language is truly a powerful instrument of thought to a practised writer, but no modern author has swept the range of its chords with so divine a hand as the great dead master, the last echo of whose exquisite music now vibrates through our hearts.

The purpose of the book is also in the highest degree noble, and nobly worked out. This purpose (to express it in the phraseology with which he has made us familiar) is to evolve the ideal from the real, to awake the slumbering divinity within each human soul, and arouse it to conquest over the lower nature, which too often forces the soul to be its slave. The hero, Kenelm Chillingley, is an aristocrat, heir to ten thousand a year and a baronetcy ; that is to say, he is born into a false life, where he stands idle, with the privileged few, upon a gilded daïs, looking down upon the toiling many who have to fight with destiny and the world for their daily bread. He goes

through the usual routine of tutorism and college, and returns home educated up to the latest modern idea, saturated with the beliefs and tendencies of the modern age, and in his own person is the perfect exponent of the character that results from the teaching. He has all the assumption and apathy, the dogmatism and indifference, the self-assertion and entire want of reverence which characterises the new generation that never knew youth, because curiosity is satisfied before it is awakened, and desire satiated before it is aroused. The generation that looks with ineffable disdain upon marriage, creeds, parental authority, and authority of all kinds ; that yawns but never enjoys ; that sees in God only a metaphysical expression, in nature a mechanical series of external phenomena, in man only a developed ape ; in the soul an incomplete embryo ; which believes nothing but what can be proved, and in whose mind logic has overthrown Faith. Kenelm is the perfect representative of these modern philosophers : ‘A man who thought himself so much wiser than his parents ; who had gained honours at the university ; a man of the finest temperament ; a man so nicely critical in mind that there was not a law of art or nature in which he did not detect a flaw.’

His father, Sir Peter, a sterling gentleman of the old school, mourns greatly over the apathy and languid indifference of his splendid son, from whose talents so much was expected, and tries to arouse his ambition by the prospect of entering Parliament. Accordingly the tenants are gathered together to meet the young heir, and Kenelm, who really loves his excellent father, promises, for his sake, to go through the dreadful ordeal of coming of age. Immense rejoicings take place, and Sir Peter fondly hopes to see his son gaining all hearts and votes by his tact and eloquence. But the speech in which Kenelm responds to the cheers for his health and happiness is more startling than pleasing, though the manner was eminently graceful, and the intonation perfect. He tells the people that he is not really worth the fuss they make about him ; his family, certainly, had lived on the one spot of earth for about

the fourth part of the world's duration, but seemed to have made the world no better for their existence. For himself, he had, indeed, gained honours at college—that is, he was first of the first in the very worst system of education that could be devised to fit young men for life ; of which the principal and most glorious epochs were boat races and college suppers, where each man tried to make himself utterly incapable of uttering or comprehending an idea ; not that it was much matter, for man was only an advanced gorilla. Life was a wretched affair, and no one could tell if there were any other or better ; old age meant simply disease and humiliation, therefore, in wishing them good health, he by no means wished them long life, for the two were incompatible, and, indeed, the sooner they had all done with the one they knew, the better. Of course, Sir Peter was aghast, and the farmers and people much discomfited. But Kenelm quietly returns to his usual occupation, languidly catches trout, and seems much surprised that everyone does not see the matter of life-philosophy quite as he does.

Sir Peter then invites fashionable company to the house to try the effect of society upon his son. Amongst them are some admirably drawn social types—Mivers Chillingley, one of the best—he is the editor of the 'Londoner,' in which a caustic and clever weekly review is easily recognised, a journal set up on the principle of contempt ; which admires nobody, believes in nothing, and finds fault with everything, but never says how anything can be done better ; which annihilates an author with the refined cruelty of sarcasm, and would dismiss a contributor ignominiously who permitted a single good-natured word to appear in his estimate of a man, a book, a painting, or a political project. Mivers Chillingley, as a man of letters, despised the world ; as a man of the world he despised letters ; as representative of both he revered himself. There was nothing violent about him. 'Avoid ambition' is one of his axioms, it is gouty ; and earnestness is exceedingly vulgar, noisy and revolutionary. He patronises Christianity, for it does no harm ; and is part of social order, like a white necktie for evening

dress. In short, he is thoroughly realistic ; content with the neutral tints of life, and of the school of 'Eclectical Christology.' His social maxims are marked by an admirable and amusing cynicism ; marriage he postpones until woman's rights make her man's equal ; then she will no longer seize upon the two drawing-rooms as her right, and leave the husband to a den on the ground floor looking out upon a yard ; they will toss up for the back parlour ; nor will his brougham be torn from him by the angel of his house, at the most unseasonable hours, to be filled with crinolines and chignons ; the wife must work, too, for her share in the expenditure ; no work, no equality. However, after all, he is content with single life. 'Nothing ages like matrimonial felicity,' and youth, or the appearance of it, is a treasure to be preserved. 'I mean to remain thirty-five,' he says, 'all my life. If I am more I shall not own it. No one is bound to criminate himself—never say you are ill. Refuse to be ill. Begin your wig early, and the world will never know the moment at which you become gray.'

In contrast with this sarcastic and amusing cynic is Gordon Chillingley, the astute, bland, insinuating politician, who has no scruples, for he has no creed, and believes in nothing but himself. If in his aim to be Prime Minister, Christianity stood in his way, he would bring in a bill to abolish Christianity, maintaining, at the same time, that it would be the best possible thing for the Christians themselves.

But Kenelm grows weary of all our hollow social system, fashionable and political, and above all he is weary of himself. He wants the great stimulants to work—poverty, ambition, or love. The latter he considers an abnegation of intellect, and marriage, or life-long bondage, as the insane result. He looks upon all the women of society as shams, and all the men as false. Seeming, seeming, he abhors it—will no one show him true life, where people will not seem, but be ? Then Sir Peter suggests travel ; prepares introductions to all the Courts of Europe, and engages a courier versed in all languages ; but when the day arrives for departure, Kenelm has disappeared—gone forth alone to seek true life, no one knows whither ; a

divine discontent is on him, he has no fixed purpose ; but at least he can quit the deep-worn grooves of civilisation—he can be free. We follow him in his wanderings. He buys a peasant's garb, conceals his name and all evidences of his rank, and proceeds in a direction where he cannot be known. His first new sensation is work and its reward. He helps to gather in the hay for a farmer, doing his work well, as a gentleman always does when work is required of him, and receives in return a couple of shillings and his dinner. He is hungry, and the pleasure of a healthy appetite is revealed to him. Other adventures follow. More work is done ; he becomes the hero of the village, setting all wrong right, turning all dissonance to harmony ; he helps lovers, aids the poor, comforts the afflicted, softens the rugged. He is the *Deus ex machinâ* of the small world around him, even finding it necessary for the general good to fight the great bully of the place, a ferocious fellow, a blacksmith ; he does fight him and conquers. It is a combat of rude, blind, brute strength against educated force, and the trained force, as it always will, gains the mastery ; then he sets himself the task of redeeming the cowed and conquered savage, and from the brute state to elevate him to a man. An interest arises in him to work on the coarse elements of this strong soul and infuse into them a higher life. He succeeds. The savage is humanised, and all the strength that had run to waste in brute ferocity is turned into a lever to lift the soul and the life of the man up to intellect and order. 'You,' he says to Kenelm, 'first taught me to think, first showed me that the body should be the servant of the mind.'

A wider field of interest now opens before Kenelm ; he feels that he stands in a world of dead intellects, and he tries to arouse the slumbering angel within each heart to a sense of purity, nobleness, justice and truth. At last he has found the stimulus that makes life endurable—he is doing good. His influence is an *Anastasis*, a resurrection power. The dry bones live, and as his own life is brought into relation with the multiform life of humanity through sorrow, and with the

infinite life of God through good, all weariness and bitter sense of isolation pass from his heart.

Female influence now comes at last to spiritualise his life, and draw him into divine sympathy with another soul : that kind of sympathy, quite distinct from passion, which one meets only once in life, and never more. He is thrown into the society of a girl of his own rank, an heiress, handsome, intellectual, high-bred, with that fascination of manner where quiet is combined with dignity and grace ; a woman gently true and kindly loving, with woman's best attributes, intense feelings and intense sense of duty ; with whom a man of intellect and culture can converse on equal terms and feel that he is appreciated and understood. Kenelm is proud of her friendship, feels nobler by her influence—still he does not love, though why he does not is a mystery even to himself. But Cecilia loves him with that silent, strong devotion which demands nothing, but is ready to sacrifice all. She is content to be the Egeria of his life, to wait and hope, and for his sake she refuses all the brilliant offers made for her hand.

Meanwhile another influence touches Kenelm's heart, and at last melts the ice of egoism and apathy. A fairy, a vision crosses his path, a spirit-child, that in her graceful, beautiful youth seems scarcely to touch earth ; with no knowledge of life, no training, no culture, but with all the instincts of Heaven. Suddenly his whole being leaped out of philosophy into passion. No one can unravel the mystery, but most of us have known 'the attraction that draws one human being to another, and makes it so exquisite a happiness to sit quiet and mute by another's side ; which stills for a moment the busiest thoughts of the brain, the most turbulent desires of the heart, and renders us conscious but of one present, ineffable idea.' Kenelm gives himself up to this magnetic influence, but before the union he contemplates can be accomplished death shakes the beautiful blossom from the tree, and he first learns sorrow by the grave of his first love.

There seems to be an occult meaning in this episode of love. This spirit-child may symbolise the ideal which had

fitted before his youth in vague, shadowy aspirations—not yet brought into fixed relations with actual life, but, the ideal passes, and as illusions vanish, his views of the world, life, and society become truer and clearer. He returns to his class, and to the duties of the station in which he was born. ‘I have known life,’ he says; ‘I have known sorrow, and now I do not say I will die, but I will live the life of work and action.’ He finds that rank and wealth are powerful adjuncts to a man’s career; with character and ability they ensure success, but there are two special vices from which men are seldom lifted, and which insure degradation—drinking and gambling. Men are not born equal; the axiom is false; but each is given a sphere wherein to work. Some are leaders of men by mental and moral elevation; others are the toiling labourers in the vineyard; but all are doing God’s work as He has appointed, if they work with truth and earnestness. ‘Love for men, reverence for God, is the true basis of action, and no character is sound that enlarges its surface at the expense of these supports.’ The true equality is not to level down society to the coarse and unlettered mob, but to lift democracy to nobility through culture, and to make all men Aristos by noble principle, high purpose, gentleness, goodness, truth. True nobility is in the life, not in birth or riches. A life of low aims is a vulgar life, no matter how gilded it may be. A man with the lineage of kings, estates more than royal, may sink below the level of the meanest by the meanness of his tastes, habits and pursuits. These are the views that now dawn on Kenelm’s mind, rectifying the dreams of his youth and nerving him for the combat with evil, for ‘all life is agonistical, and earth is the wrestling-ground, not the resting-place of man.’

His father welcomes him back gladly, and bids him make the senate of his country the arena of his combat against sin and suffering, and ignorance and debasement, for ‘the true problem of a Legislature is how to increase a people’s splendour and virtue, and how to diminish its penury and crime.’ They are in London, musing over the tide of human life as they stand upon Westminster Bridge. His father speaks: ‘You

stand by the stream of a mighty river, before you the senate of an empire greater than Alexander's ; behind you the market of a commerce to which that of Tyre was but a pitiful trade ; beyond, the squalid hordes of lives to be redeemed and lifted ; and, out of sight but not far distant, the nation's Valhalla, the glory symbolised in the war-cry, " Victory or Westminster Abbey." And so we leave the hero on the threshold of a new life.

The philosophy of the book is not new ; others have also preached this great gospel of work—*laborare est orare*—but it seems to come to us now with a mystic strength, as from a spirit voice, and with a loftier and more triumphant sense of man's destiny here and hereafter. Very touching are these last noble words of the great author, already passing within the veil even as he wrote, for the shadow of death is upon the page, and we see that he flings his thoughts heavenward with heavenward eyes. This man knew all life, was versed in all knowledge, dowered with every gift, crowned with all the splendours of fame ; and surely it cannot but nerve the will, strengthen faith, elevate the mind, and ennoble effort to find that the experience of this splendid life found its result in these last divine words he has left to the new generation :

Believe, love, work ; live for good and you will live for God '

DISRAELI AND 'ENDYMION'

It is not often that a Prime Minister writes a novel, especially one in which he is supposed to introduce all his friends and acquaintances, while professing to deal with the celebrities of the past.

So the critics, one and all, fell upon Lord Beaconsfield's latest work, ere yet it was a day old, with a terrible and fierce voracity ; tore it limb from limb in extracts and summaries, and scattered the *disjecta membra* far and wide over the broad pages of the dailies and weeklies. Yet, why this eager haste? Why should it be necessary for all the critics to rush at once upon a book, tear the heart and life out of it, and then fling it dead upon the shelf, to be named or thought of no more? Would not the various critical estimates be more interesting after one had been given time to read, mark, and inwardly digest the contents of a work, than the present system of rapid reviewing, by which the public is forcibly spoon-fed by the professional thinkers on their condensed literary pemmican before a single independent opinion has had time to form in the brain of the intelligent reader? The system is also unfair to the author, and a clause should really be introduced into the Copyright Act prohibiting reviews for at least three months after the publication of any work. Now, an unhappy author is given but a few days to live, and after a week or so the best work, it may be, of a man's life falls into oblivion ; the excitement is over, the interest dead, and the critics set to work again with their exhaustive reviews upon some other theme—the nature of elephants, perhaps, or monkeys, or ' the

intelligent turnip'—and the name even of 'Endymion' is heard no more.

Yet, though he has been brayed in a mortar, there is still something left in 'Endymion' worth our study. More especially in the aphorisms, from which we obtain strange glimpses into the workings of an exceptional mind and nature—mystic, many-gifted; one not passively led by events, but that seems to coerce destiny by the strength of a remorseless, fixed, unalterable will. In strong volition lies the secret of the great statesman's success: what Danton calls *l'audace, encore l'audace*. Over and over again he reiterates that what a man wills strongly he achieves finally. *Vouloir c'est pouvoir*; this was the creed of his life. Ambition and volition, according to him, are the two forces that lead a man to victory over all things—fate, fortune, or adversity; and the story of Endymion is a mythus in which this doctrine is incarnated.

There is little involvement of plot, or excitement of dramatic situation in the construction of the novel; nor have the characters any distinct entity, but they have all a subtle meaning which is far more interesting. They are types, abstractions, allegories; and we accept them as such, without caring much for the exactness of individual portraiture.

There is a tailor, for instance, who turns afterwards into the Railway King. He is the type of the middle-class, rising through trade and speculation to wealth, which means power; and, through this power, becoming at last the guest, friend, and helper of princes.

There is a writer, sketched with keen, incisive humour; brilliant, versatile, capable of illustrating all subjects, by his omnivorous reading and omniscience, with 'a bubbling imagination, alternating between St. Just, Laud, and the Goddess of Reason,' who may be any of the persons named by the critical guessers, but who also certainly represents the dogmatism and egoism and self-assertion of the philosophical school of the day, which accepts everything indiscriminately, from Buddha to Huxley, but reverences nothing; and we are

amused by the extravagance of the paradoxes without caring in the least to read the riddle of the personality.

The haughty, magnificent Zenobia represents the proud patrician nobility in the vain, luxurious era before the passing of the Reform Bill; the splendid insolence of caste, rank, birth, and blood; of the privileged race that believed in the sacredness of 'the great families,' disdained the middle-class, and utterly ignored the idea that the people had any human rights; who looked on the world as created only for the alternation of Whig and Tory, to fill their purses, gild their names, supply places, pensions, bishoprics, and colonial governments for their sons and cousins, put a star on the breast, and a garter on the knee; pomp and power their only aim; the worship of themselves their only religion; the race that hated railroads, hated gas, hated everything that levelled and gave the people a chance of progress; while the people themselves knew little of their rights; 'they were only half-born.'

Contrasted with this picture is Imogene—Lady Beaumaris. She represents society after the passing of the Reform Bill, when the middle-classes were forcing their way into notice and the sacred circles; and the people, just awakening to a sense of their lost birthright, were sending up, like Esau, an exceeding bitter cry to Heaven. Imogene is a daughter of the people—her mother a dressmaker, her sister owner of a boarding-house—but, fascinating and clever, she wins the heart of a peer, and becomes, through wealth and political influence, the recognised leader of a great and powerful party.

'Was she not a shop-girl, or something?' asks one of the great ladies contemptuously.

Still, they all rush eagerly to her strawberry parties; for the delicate patrician is always ready to quaff the cup of pleasure, no matter who offers it, when royalty leads the way. This sketch will be easily recognised; but it is drawn with no ill-natured hand and in no unkindly spirit. It may be noticed, *en passant*, that Maturin, the Irish novelist, is the only author named throughout the work; Imogene—Lady

Beaumaris—being called after the heroine of Maturin's tragedy of 'Bertram,' which set the town on fire when played by Kean ; while O'Connell is the only political leader mentioned directly, and his advent to Parliament is characterised as one of the great events of the century. Yet Ireland complains of being neglected !

In Mrs. Neuchatel, the great banker's wife, one cannot help thinking that a certain illustrious lady is slightly indicated, who cares little for her enormous wealth, but loves to retire to her remote country residence, where she attends to her schools and gives balls to her servants. She laments constantly over the magnificence of her position, and always wears the plainest dress ; is accomplished, an artist, musician, and even learned ; asks innumerable questions, fixes her eyes on the speaker, and loves to be talked to on all subjects, and to hear all the new theories of the day ; is clever at her pen, writes endless letters to her daughter, and is altogether a very remarkable woman.

The Empress Eugénie, as Queen Agrippina, is sketched with some delicate compliments on her figure, her hair (the loveliest in Europe), and the ceaseless grace and irresistible charm of her Court ; and a portrait of the young Prince Imperial is also given, but this is altered subsequently—perhaps after his sad death—to one of his father, the Emperor, when he dared and gained a throne. The Empress likewise becomes transformed to Myra, and again to the Princess Alexandra, the lovely hair being changed to 'a crop' over the high white brow, to suit the Princess of Wales ; while the arrival in England, the reception by the Prince of the young Danish bride, and public procession afterwards, are made to do duty for the marriage of Eugénie and Napoleon.

It is these sudden transformation scenes, these topsyturvyisms, which render it so difficult to catch a true likeness in the shifting phantasmagoria.

The real interest, however, lies not in the fanciful political history, but in the thinly-veiled autobiography ; for Endymion—with his youth of splendid illusions and broken hopes ; his

failures, trials, and triumphs ; with no inheritance but his genius, and no hand to aid him save a woman's—is the author himself ; while beside him, ever inseparable, all-daring, the sustainer of his courage, the inspirer of his life, stands his twin-sister Myra.

But these things are an allegory. These twin-children of the soul—Endymion and Myra—haughty and beautiful, represent the two great propelling forces of his life—genius and ambition : genius loving life in all its fulness, through all moods, splendours, failures, victories ; and ambition that loves nothing but success, cold, calm, resolute—guiding all the passionate impulses of Endymion, and bending them to serve one over-mastering purpose, which is the attainment of power. This is the meaning of the myth, the solution of Myra's character ; for, as the representative of ambition, no petty events touch her ; no family ties interest ; no love melts ; no fluctuations of fortune shake her pride or her courage. She holds herself apart from all weakness or frivolity—her glance ever lifted above, never on the earth she treads. She marries twice, but not from love—for ambition never loves—but from the motive to gain social recognition as the first step to social power. Yet she makes a good wife, and fulfils all her duties ; for temptation and sin are for lower natures, for those that stand on lower levels than the one she treads with such haughty and passionless pride.

To lift Endymion to power, with her steadfast mind, while her steadfast eyes are fixed on the sun, fearless as the eagle, this is the sole aim of her existence. When finally, in the course of the fantastic story, she becomes a queen, it is at the same moment Endymion is made Prime Minister—ruler of England—and, as such, ruler of half the world besides ; and when the crown is placed on Myra's head the victory is complete—ambition and genius have triumphed.

The allegory is perfect and beautiful, strangely mystic, yet not difficult to follow when one has caught some idea of the meaning. When Endymion returns home, wearied with the ceaseless war of destiny against his young life, it is Myra

throws the pine logs on the fire to light up their gloomy home ; even here there is a symbol and meaning. Amongst the aphorisms many refer to ambition as the strongest impulse to action, the great tangential force of a human life ; ambition not for ease, luxury, or wealth, but for power. Attain this, and all the rest will follow. The world is yours to rule, and men will be your bondslaves. 'Great men should only aim at power, and all the accidents of life should be considered only with reference to this one aim.' Again : 'Great men think only of opportunity, not of time ; to wait for time is the sign of the weak and feeble-minded.' This is an aphorism worth remembering.

The manners, also, should suit the aim of life ; this he considers of vast importance. 'Avoid social familiarity.' 'You never know what you may be, and to have to change your manner is awkward ; give your hand, therefore, as if you might one day be a Sovereign, or at least President of a Republic. Men of destiny should avoid badinage. Stately reserve has a certain power. Young men, politically, should join the party of progress ; but, socially, youth should have ceremonious manners ; a country of fogs and a powerful middle class with enormous appetites demands gravity.'

The happiness which the English people seem to find in food is evidently abhorrent to his fastidious temperament. 'The French idea of patriotism,' he says, 'was cosmopolitan ; but nationality in England means simply increased exports. An insular nation with an enormous appetite cannot be cosmopolitan.'

The condensed wisdom of a successful life is worth studying on all subjects. Here is some good social advice : 'The secret of popularity is, no violent originality, not too positive assertion, and, above all, no controversy.' 'The art of conversation is to be prompt without being stubborn ; to refute without argument, and to clothe grave matters in motley ;' one should remember, also, that 'knowledge is the foundation of eloquence.'

He has so fully fathomed life that all men seem to him

merely as tools and instruments. A thorough cynicism is the outcome of his experience. He believes in no one, save, perhaps, in women. They evidently exert, and have exerted, an immense influence over him. He glories in their beauty, their divine sympathy, their magical powers of inspiration, the exquisite grace they give to life ; their devotion and courage, which can lift a man to greatness and make him great. And he loves to surround this idol with splendour and magnificence and to cover her with jewels as a queen. The style he most admires has all the richness of Eastern colouring—a splendid, haughty, gorgeous, voluptuous beauty, with something Oriental and fantastic in dress is his ideal. To him woman is the queen, the priestess, the Pythia of society. Her influence may be occult, but is all-powerful. 'Women make and unmake ministries.' 'Great men seem to govern, but in reality it is some hidden hand that leads, probably a woman's.' He also holds them to be especial favourites of destiny.

'Most men of mark are victims ; but a great woman must always have her way.' 'A man may work all his life, and at the last, when he has one leg in the grave and no hair on his head, he manages to get a coronet ; but a woman sits next some man at dinner, smiles, fascinates, and is made a duchess at once.' He never forgets how much his own life owed to a woman. And it is the homage of gratitude when he represents ambition in a woman's form as the inspiration and guide of his hero's career, the twin-sister of his soul. To aim highly, will strongly, dare bravely, and take a woman's hand to guide—this seems the secret of his success, the prologue and epilogue of his career. But the glare of his splendid position does not blind him to the darkness gathering on the horizon. In the spirit of Semitic prophecy he sees that we are approaching a great world crisis, and recognises the communistic influence that is undermining all the thrones of Europe. He feels the power of the secret societies, and dreads it ; for it is merciless, without pity, without remorse. A terrible revenge lies at the base of it—a revenge for six thousand years of oppression, waiting only its opportunity to destroy all civilisation and all

religion. Yet he has no gospel to preach to the people. He never touches on the deeper mysteries of life, nor its higher aspirations ; and this world of party politics, of warring egoisms, of fierce and feverish greed of power, is a fruitless land to live in, where no food grows for hungering souls. No lofty purpose can be traced in all his political religion ; no broad scheme for lifting up the masses from want and bondage ; nothing but the triumph of individual ambition, the despotism of power. And yet, though so much has been gained, the cry of unsatisfied desire still seems rising from his heart. A spirit of gloom and sadness is over this latest work, as if already he stood within the dark shadow of the grave, and felt, with a bitterness of indignation against destiny, that life had so much more to give, if only there were time.

What is a title, or a ribbon, to a man of supreme intellect, who feels and knows how much above all title he stands by right of his intellect ? And if he accepted them, it was only to prove to this privileged class, scorned by him in the depths of his soul, that he could be, when he chose, their equal—and master.

Had he been given a few more years of power, he might have achieved something to satisfy even his ambition. He would have advanced the Eastern question, of which the annexation of Cyprus was the first step, by the acquisition of Palestine, either by treaty or by purchase, the Rothschilds and all the Hebrews of the world contributing. Then a moment might have come—a moment of destiny—when he could have proclaimed himself Lord over Edom ; perhaps, even, of Jerusalem. The Semitic aspirations would thus have been satisfied. And genius and ambition, Endymion and Myra, might rest content with their mission in the world and their place in history.

THOMAS MOORE

STRONG nations fight, oppressed nations sing ; and thus, not with armies and fleets, but with the passionate storm of lyric words have the Irish people kept up for centuries their ceaseless war against alien rule. For words have a mystic power over men, and with the word Liberty on their lips, and the ideal of Nationhood in their hearts, the Irish have been preserved by their poets and orators from degenerating into the coarse vulgarisms of music and song so popular amongst a people who have no aspirations, no ideal beyond the greed of gain and the plenitude of all the sensuous enjoyments of life.

It is Ruskin who says 'all that is best in a nation comes from the spirit of revolt,' and it is this spirit, transmitted through successive generations, that has kept Ireland from much that is debasing and degrading in the ordinary life and amusements of more prosperous nations. All honour, then, to the chief of Irish poets, 'the sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,' as Shelley has so beautifully designated Moore. Love of country was the source of all his highest utterances, the divine fire that kindled his genius, and has given enduring vitality to his words ; for the Irish melodies will live for ever in the heart of the Irish race, though everything else he wrote may be forgotten. Through Moore's lyrics, set to the pathetic Irish music, the wrongs of Ireland were first made known to Europe, and the sympathy excited by them for a people so gifted and so unfortunate, materially helped to break the terrible and insulting bondage of the penal laws.

Moore was born in 1780, the same year as Béranger, the national poet of France, and both sprang from the people. But while Béranger's genius was nourished by the revolution that established the rights of man, the young Irish poet found himself a degraded serf in his own land, the crushed and helpless victim of a foreign tyranny. All progress, all distinctions, all means of education were forbidden to Catholics. They were not allowed the common rights of citizens, and were even denied the exercise of the franchise. It was not till 1793, when Moore was old enough to be conscious of the degradation of his race and creed, that Catholics were allowed to enter Trinity College, though all university honours and emoluments were still withheld from them. Moore was one of the first of the young helots who accepted the privilege of entering the university, and in time he stood for a scholarship, to which he was entitled by his answering, but was refused on account of his religion.

What wonder if he felt bitterly, and expressed openly his detestation of English rule? The college authorities grew alarmed; a spirit of nationality, which in Ireland is supposed to mean rebellion, was suspected amongst the students, and the most daring and fiery and gifted of the young alumni were arraigned before the Board, and subjected to the ordeal of a trial for sedition and sympathy with revolution. Moore behaved nobly on this occasion, denying nothing he had said or done, but refusing by a word to implicate others with his own expressed opinions. The authorities were awed, and he was permitted to continue his college course without further molestation. His time then was devoted to literature and study. Buried amongst the old books of Marsh's Library, the *Psyche* wings began to unfold themselves, and before he was twenty the 'Anacreon,' which first made him celebrated, was finished.

He went to London with the manuscript, and fortune and fame quickly followed on its publication. The first red-rose dawn of a new and true poet-soul appearing above the literary horizon was at once recognised and welcomed. From the

Regent down, society seized on the young poet, and nearly strangled all that was good in him, Armida-like, with chains of roses.

The 'Anacreon' suited the taste of the luxurious, sensualised age, and in his next work, 'Little's Poems,' Moore unhappily degraded his genius to the level of the society that worshipped him. The 'Anacreon' had not the immortal element in it, still it lives, and is sometimes read ; but 'Little's Poems' had the seeds of death in them, and they died. The true fount of eternal song had not yet opened in Moore's soul. He was himself unconscious where his great strength lay, and wasted in the sentimentalities of frivolous and affected feeling the power that was made to move the world's great heart.

The magic influence that at last unsealed the fount, and revealed to the poet the riches of his own genius, came from the divinely beautiful spirit of Irish music. At once, when it touched his soul, the hidden stream of inspiration rushed up to heaven, clear and pure and sparkling, and fell to earth again in showers of many coloured splendours, strengthening and refreshing not only his own loved land, but stimulating amongst the far-off nations the growth of Freedom's goodly tree.

Moore himself describes the effect which Irish music had on him when he first began to study it for the purpose of writing words suitable to the airs—this mournful music, so sad and so expressive, that made Beethoven exclaim, when he first heard it, 'That must be the music of an oppressed and suffering people.' The whole history and genius and temperament of the nation can be traced in its fluctuations of mirth and sadness, its transient discords, and triumphant marches mingled with wailing, pathetic minors, the alternate languor and turbulence, the despondency and defiance, so characteristic of the vain but ceaseless efforts of a nation to throw off an intolerable yoke.

All this Moore found in our national music, whose origin is lost in the night of time, but whose sweetest and saddest

airs date from the cruel era of the Tudors ; and his genius flowed rapidly in a divine harmony with its blended gaiety and gloom. It was no effort to him to write then ; the thoughts came with tears, and crystallised into imperishable gems of song. He had felt and he had suffered, that was sufficient ; he was one of the helots, with the penal brand on him, and he appealed to a whole people who burned with the same indignant sense of wrong. It was not the voice of one heart, but the cry of a nation that went up from his verses, and startled the world into sympathy and pity for Ireland.

Translations of the 'Melodies' were rapidly made into all the tongues of Europe. Wherever oppression existed, they helped to give resistance utterance. They passed from nation to nation, as a burning torch passes from hand to hand, the signal of the uprising of a people against tyranny ; and so they exist an enduring portion of the world's heritage, graven with a diamond pen upon the rocks for ever.

The enthusiasm kindled by them in Ireland alarmed the Government. Their tendency was pronounced 'mischievous,' and the idea was entertained of forcibly suppressing their publication. Moore had to defend himself against the charge of 'stirring up the passions of a turbulent mob.' 'To those,' he says, 'who can identify nationality with treason, I shall not deign to offer an apology for the political sentiments expressed ;' 'besides,' he adds sarcastically, 'this volume is for the pianofortes of the rich, for those who can afford to have their national zeal a little stimulated, without exciting much dread of the excesses into which it may lead them ; and whose nerves may be alarmed with advantage, since more may be expected from their fears than could be gained from their justice.'

Moore was then but twenty-seven, in the full flush of youth and genius, and that inspiration which fame gives to the poet while she crowns him. Whatever was best and truest in his nature he enshrined in these national songs, and by them he lives ; all else he has written, rich as they are in fancy, beauty, and exquisite diction, are almost unheeded by the people ; the 'Melodies' form the true pedestal of his glory. He has been

made immortal by a hundred songs. His principles, also triumphed at last over the petty factions of the hour, and what was pronounced 'sedition' when he wrote, soon, by the overwhelming power of public opinion, was forced to become law. The strong arm of O'Connell guided the passions, and directed those mighty energies evoked by the divine gift of song, and the fetters lifted from a nation by the Act of Emancipation fell as a trophy at the poet's feet. Moore's verses were the inspiration of 'the Liberator,' and even Wellington may have been touched by this noble appeal :—

Yet, still the last crown of thy toils is remaining,
The grandest, the purest even thou hast yet known,
Tho' proud was thy task other nations unchaining,
Far prouder to heal the deep wounds of thy own.
At the foot of that throne for whose weal thou hast stood,
Go ! plead for the Land that first cradled thy fame,
And bright o'er the flood of her tears and her blood
Let the rainbow of hope be her Wellington's name.

The history of Ireland repeats itself from age to age with such a mournful rhythm, that Moore's poems find as quick a response in the hearts of the people now as when first published. Each generation goes through the same phases—resistance, defeat, despair. The new generation follows with hopes as brilliant and resolves as bold, again to try, again to fail. And so the sad trilogy is acted from age to age, while the nation can only helplessly mourn, as victim after victim falls dead in the dust of the arena.

Moore was the truest interpreter of these successive moods of aspiration and gloom ; and his verse so simple, yet so passionate and powerful, has become almost the national idiom for the expression of national feeling. No poet is so often quoted. His lyrics are in the hearts and on the lips of our people, and our orators still wing their arrows against oppression with a line from Moore to make the aim more fatal.

A very perfect and beautiful translation of the 'Melodies' into Irish was made by Dr. M'Hale, the learned and patriotic Archbishop of Tuam ; and as the impetuous peasantry of the

West listen with tears, or wild applause to Moore's verses, sung to their national music in their native tongue, one feels that love of freedom and dreams of independence can never die out amongst a people so sensitive to all that is noble, tender, and heroic. Moore knew that his glory was linked with these songs : for all poets that have once touched the nation's heart live evermore with the nation's life. It was the passionate wail of an oppressed people he uttered, and all nations adopted it. It was the cry of humanity against wrong, and found a universal echo. The prophetic words have been fulfilled which he wrote with prescience of his own world-wide fame—

The stranger shall hear thy lament on his plains,
The sigh of thy harp shall be sent o'er the deep,
Till thy masters themselves as they rivet our chains,
Shall pause at the song of their captives and weep.

When the 'Melodies' were completed, Moore was at the summit of his glory. The world and its publishers were at his feet. At once he received an offer of 3,000*l.* for any poem he would choose to write on an Eastern subject. Moore describes his own anxieties after the acceptance of this splendid offer. No inspiration came ; for he had none, he says, unconnected with country ; no strength unless he lay on the breast of his mother earth ; and the very magnitude of the offer seemed to weigh down and deaden all thought and fancy in him. 'At length,' he adds, 'the thought occurred to me of founding a story on the fierce struggle between the Ghebers, the ancient fire-worshippers of Persia, and their haughty Moslem masters. From this moment a new and deep interest took possession of me, and the spirit that had spoken in the "Melodies" of Ireland soon found itself a home in the East.'

Thus, the true inspiration came, and the poem flowed on rapidly.

'The Fire Worshippers,' though the scene is laid in Persia, is, in fact, an episode of '98, and the portrait of Hafed, the young dauntless hero, is drawn from Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Though Moore sang of Iran, his thoughts were of Erin ; and

underlying every page of the poem is an allusion to the wrongs which Ireland has suffered from her conquerors ; while all the smouldering indignation of his own feelings is expressed in the lines :—

Yes, *I* am of that outcast few,
To Iran and to vengeance true ;
Who curse the hour your Arabs came
To desolate our shrines of flame ;
And swear, before God's burning eye,
To break our country's chains, or die.

While the passionate but vain efforts of the Ghebers to throw off the yoke of the intolerant invader recall the story of the fated Geraldine, who is described as

One of the ancient hero line,
Along whose glorious currents shine
Names that have sanctified their blood,
As Lebanon's small mountain flood
Is rendered holy by the ranks
Of sainted cedars on its banks.

And our own people may find their likeness drawn in—

Iran's sons that never, never
Will stoop to be the victor's slaves,
While heaven has light or earth has graves !
Spirits of fire, that brood not long,
But flash resentment back for wrong ;
And hearts where slow, but deep, the seeds
Of vengeance ripen into deeds.
Who tho' they know the riven chain
Snaps but to enter in the heart
Of him who rends its links apart,
Yet dare the issue, blest to be,
Even for one bleeding moment free,
And die in pangs of liberty !

The allusions, also, to the desecrated altars of the people are numerous :—

The fierce invaders pluck the gem
From Iran's broken diadem,
And bind her ancient faith in chains.

In the fall of the young chief, who fought for freedom
 'on the green sea brink,' we recognise the fate of Lord
 Edward :—

'Tis come, his hour of martyrdom
 In Iran's sacred cause, is come ;
 And tho' his life hath passed away,
 Like lightning on a stormy day,
 Yet, shall his death-hour leave a track
 Of glory, permanent and bright,
 To which the brave shall long look back
 With fond regret, and by its light
 Watch through the hours of slavery's night.

So dies the Gheber chief :

His glories lost, his cause betrayed,
 Iran, his own loved country, made
 A land of carcases and slaves ;
One dreary waste of chains and graves !

But he and his band meet death heroically, as many an Irish
 patriot has done, and call

For God and Iran ! as they fall.

Then the informers are denounced, as they might often be
 in Irish history before and since :

Oh ! for a tongue to curse the slave
 Whose treason, like a deadly blight,
 Comes o'er the councils of the brave,
 And blasts them in their hour of might.
 His country's curse, his children's shame,
 Outcast of virtue, peace, and fame.

Even the captor of Lord Edward, the exceedingly unpopular
 gentleman who was generally believed to be both sanctimonious
 and cruel, is drawn with the characteristics attributed to him
 by the Irish people, who detested his name :—

He sleeps
 Calm while a nation round him weeps ;
 While curses load the air he breathes,
 And falchions from unnumbered sheaths

Are starting to avenge the shame
His race hath brought on Iran's name,
Hard, heartless chief, unmoved alike
Mid eyes that weep and swords that strike,
One of that saintly murderous brood,
Who think through unbeliever's blood,
Lies their directest path to heaven—
One who will pause, and kneel unshod
In the warm blood his hand hath pour'd,
To mutter o'er some text of God,
Engraven on his reeking sword.

The perfect and beautiful poem of 'Lalla Rookh' was received by the public with the most intense enthusiasm, and 'The Fire Worshippers' was pronounced the best of all the tales, probably because it was vital with true feeling. Lord Jeffrey, in the 'Edinburgh,' gave it the palm for excellence, though he entirely overlooked its cryptic political signification. Moore was engaged for two years on this work; for he says of himself that he worked slowly, and was a far more *painstaking workman* than people imagined.

For his next poem, 'The Loves of the Angels,' he received 1,000*l*. And his charming prose tale followed, 'The Epicurean,' which, though closely imitated from the French romance of 'Sethos,' is yet full of Moore's peculiar beauties. Then he worked for years at his history of Ireland, which, if somewhat imperfect for want of adequate knowledge, is yet a model of style in eloquence and diction. When the first glow of youth was over, Moore led a retired life in his English home, far from the brilliant world, in the soul's quiet that genius loves. Sometimes he visited his native country, and was always received with triumphs and ovations. When he entered the theatre at Dublin the whole audience rose up to welcome him as if he were a king; and he was a king over the hearts of the nation, and this spontaneous homage was the sacred symbol of the poet's coronation.

His last years were made sad and desolate by home sorrows; all his children died before him. His family became extinct; the race culminated and ended with him. But that which is

best in the utterance of a great human soul can never die ;
the children of the poet's brain are immortal—

And the hearts and the voices of Erin prolong
Through the answering future his name and his song.

His library and his harp, that Irish harp which gave him inspiration, have been placed in the keeping of the Royal Irish Academy, as heirlooms of the nation, and a room has been set apart for their reception, which is now called 'The Moore Library ;' while his statue, the first ever publicly erected in Ireland to an Irishman, has, by a kind of poetical justice, been placed in sight of the college that tried to have him expelled for his nationality ; and was inaugurated by the Viceroy of the Government that would willingly have stopped the publication of the 'Irish Melodies' and had the poet prosecuted for sedition.

But Moore lies in his death-sleep in English earth. Is this right ? Should not the poet's sacred dust be laid in holy Ireland, amidst the people to whom his genius was consecrated ? Let us hope that a day will come when his mortal remains will be brought back to the land he loved so well, with the reverent homage of a nation, and then a fitting monument will be raised in the Irish capital to the great national poet of Ireland, and the most perfect lyrist of the age.

LEIGH HUNT

As poet, dramatist, critic, essayist, novelist, and political writer, Leigh Hunt's genius flashed brilliantly and successfully through all realms of literature, illuminating everything he touched ; uniting grace and melody, power and feeling, wit and good sense, in a degree beyond most of his contemporaries. And alongside of his genius flowed a genial daily life—that of an amiable, kindly, patient-suffering, loving, human-hearted man. He also interests as having lived among the great men of a great era—receiving their light and flashing back many a ray to us in those sunny, sparkling pages of a self-told life, where the old man's fancy, still vivid with eternal youth, trails vinelike round all subjects, the simplest and barest, and leaves them rich with purple clusters of depending fruit. He himself, one of the last of that great Titan brood who warred against the elder gods and overthrew them, with all their sheep-and-buttercup literature, Strephons and Delias, flutes and crooks, shepherds and 'tender fairs'—altogether bucolical and mournful to think of.

Leigh Hunt's influence on literature was even more remarkable than any work which he produced. Amongst them all, none, perhaps, will travel far down the stream of time, except that sweet 'Story of Rimini,' well deserving to be stereotyped on the human heart ; but the influence and direction he gave to poetry, with the echo of all his sweet harmonies, will be permanent. He was the first to break up the stiff, monotonous cadence which had twanged for a hundred years, from Pope to Cowper, into a thousand graceful, flowing

curves and modulations, that made the English language in his hands seem as flexible, soft, and musical as the Italian. All the younger poets followed his example ; and if our poetry now excels in varied cadence it is to his exquisite gift of musical utterance the important change is mainly owing.

It would be a difficult task to assign Leigh Hunt's true place among the nations—not for the Homeric reasons, but because his ancestry mingle the most various biological elements. By the father's side, for many generations, all were 'Barbadians born ;' his grandmother an O'Brien, right proud of her royal Irish blood ; his father, a West Indian, reared in Philadelphia, marries an American of Quaker lineage, with perhaps some Indian tinting ; thus, tropical fire, Irish wit and fancy, mitigated by Quakerism, combined to build up his poet-frame. Not uncongenial elements, however, for a glowing son of Helicon.

When the American revolution began, his father, being a loyalist and true Guelph, quitted the rising republic and took refuge in England. There, in 1784, his youngest and only English child was born at Edmonton (famed for its merry witch, and now for the grave of Charles Lamb), and was christened Leigh, after a member of the great Chandos race, to whom his father had become tutor.

After his settlement in England, Mr. Hunt the elder took orders, obtaining in course of time a living and much celebrity as a popular preacher. He was a man of wit and taste, with a fine voice, which charmed away the heart of the lady he afterwards married ; and was altogether a gay, pleasant, for-ever-impooverished, sanguine, planning, projecting, light-hearted fragment of humanity, who wrote a volume of sermons that never sold, and innumerable titles for non-existing books. Latterly he and his wife became Unitarians and Universalists, or believers in the final salvation of all—doctrines inherited by their poet-son.

The American mother of Quaker-race was a tall, fine brunette, with eyes and hair kissed black by the sun, and two grand virtues to begin with—a love of nature and a love of

books. She had known Franklin in her youth—the mild, musical philosopher ; and Thomas Paine, with his terrible countenance, never to be forgotten—traditions that made her interesting to her son. He says of her that she never smiled, while his father ever laughed. This commingling of grave and gay was calculated to produce the true poetic temperament—ever changing, ever passing through every arc of the circle of emotion. From his mother, likewise, along with her shadowing melancholy, that indispensable background for all high mental life, the young poet received his southern tint and Petrarch eyes, large, deep, and dark as a lake at midnight, with the tall, slender, half Indian frame, that seemed to have sprung up amidst the broad savannahs of the New World.

After the usual childhood of genius—weak health and mental precocity—he was admitted to Christ's Hospital—the very school to make one dream of celebrity and authorship. Camden and Richardson ; Stillingfleet, and Barnes, who reared the 'Thunderer,' and Mitchell, with his Greek soul, had all gone forth from it ; but, more than all, Coleridge and Charles Lamb. Many were the winged spirits fledged in these old cloisters, built for God's worship and the soul's sanctuary by Franciscan saints ; taken from them by the polygamic Henry, 'Defender of the Faith,' and bestowed on the citizen children of London by the young Edward, whose meek face still remains the badge of the Foundation.

In the intervals of the much-wearing classics and still less endurable arithmetic—for he confesses that the multiplication table was ever to him a sealed mystery—the poet-boy exulted in sonorous cadence and fancy flights with Grey, Collins, Spenser and the 'Arabian Nights.' The result was a volume of poems published, immediately on leaving school, by subscription amongst kind friends, and received with such success as made the youthful bard at once a celebrity. Thus early began his public career ; ushered into the world with a flourish of trumpets before he was twenty, he was immediately absorbed into the vortex of newspapers, reviews, critiques, and all that

brilliant ephemera which are born and die in light, their life but an hour, still it is one in the plane of the sunbeam.

Besides all this casting forth of brain-fritters, he acted as clerk in the War Office ; for genius is none the worse in having a fixed solid centre, round which all the luminous centrifugal particles of its nature may be forced to centripetalise. Charles Lamb for thirty years was clerk in the India House ; Coleridge, schoolmaster, public lecturer, newspaper and magazine contributor, anything, everything that came in his way, and in all things great ; Horace Smith, a stockbroker. All these men, and others many, turned over the clods of life with some instrument or other, and, like Elisha, ploughed and prophesied, not deadened, but strengthened rather, Antæus-like, by touching earth and standing in the furrows.

In 1804 the witty and clever Whig 'Examiner' commenced its existence, with Leigh Hunt as editor. The name was adopted after Swift's paper, in compliment to the brilliant reminiscences and unrivalled powers of the mighty Dean, whose caustic and terrible wit became the model of the new writers. Amongst them were 'men of renown'—Hazlitt, Shelley, Lamb, and others, giants if not Titans. The wit, poetry, and criticism of the new organ, together with the strong aid given to the measure of reform, raised it at once into flourishing altitude. But a change arrived. The Prince became Regent and a Tory, and the result was an indictment for libel against the editor of the 'Examiner,' who had ventured to designate the royal Adonis 'a corpulent gentleman of fifty,' the trial terminating in a sentence of imprisonment for two years against Mr. Hunt, rigorously carried out to the very letter. Two years robbed from the very prime and crowning of life's vigour, physical and mental, when every year is worth ten of the before and after ! What a mockery this law !—blindly crushing with its iron hand the powers of one of the strongest working minds of the age, to gratify the wounded vanity of the weakest, most licentious, worthless human being then existing, probably, in the three kingdoms.

The prison cell, however, was papered with a trellis of

roses, a fond delusion for the poet's fancy ; the ceiling painted in clouds and sky ; Venetian blinds, piano, bookcase, flowers added ; all that could veil iron gratings, deaden the discord of bolts and bars, and paraphrase the jailor into a graceful seneschal. Still, it was a dungeon for the *soul*, with all its ghastly prison sounds, that act on the nerves worse even than fetters on the frame ; its narrow strip of sky flecked with iron all of God's universe left visible ; and the air from the courtyard, dense with the breathings of crime, all of the mighty rushing winds of heaven permitted to visit the poet's cheek.

No wonder, when he walked forth free after two years of young life had been thus murdered, he should describe his 'bewildered' feel, as of a bird long caged and suddenly set free ; no wonder the influence of this most terrible of all tortures to which a man of genius can be subjected remained paramount, and that a languor for life rested upon the spirit which nothing after could dissipate.

But for us, readers merely, the prison scenes are full of interest. All the celebrities of the day visited the captive poet, singing, Tasso-like, through the bars ; and we seem to assist at a *conversazione* with all the splendours of the past, lending willing ears to a gossip made glorious by great names.

There came the small, white-haired Fuseli, with his fierce energy of Italian nature, making himself still fiercer for effect ; Bonnycastle, tall, gaunt, long-headed, large-featured, with deep, internal voice, equine laugh, and who 'goggled over his plate like a horse'—enchanted above all things with an Arabic translation of his works, which the pious Moslem prefaces by a thanksgiving that it had pleased God to raise us up a Bonnycastle !—and Campbell, small, handsome, compact, and elegant ; a 'French Virgil,' classical and accomplished, with a 'refining and diminishing nature, like a drawing-room mirror ;' a severe autocritic, for which reason he wrote so little, but wrote so well ; vain and envious, the world said, yet withal having a heart large enough to worship Freedom. What a contrast

the hypercritical Campbell with Theodore Hook, who poured forth heart-and-brain streams without waiting for any filter to stop the rougher particles !

Amongst the wits came Charles Lamb—he who met you with laughter and so often left you weeping ; the strangest compound nature ever formed out of genius and a tragic destiny. Thought and feeling in his fine eyes, delicate features, and fragile figure—but no vigour ; strength enough only in him, apparently, to be an idolater of those he loved. And the less strangely gifted but clever Horace Smith, whose ‘Rejected Addresses’ are sure of no rejection from our literature. What can be more ludicrously exquisite, for instance, than this parody of Wordsworth’s ‘Betty-Foybles,’ as Hood called them :—

My brother Jack was nine in May,
And I was eight on New Year’s Day,
So in Kate Wilson’s shop,
Papa !—(he’s my papa, and Jack’s)—
Bought me, last week, a doll of wax,
And brother Jack a top.

Jack’s in the pouts—and this it is,
He thinks mine came to more than his,
So to my drawer he goes,
Takes out the doll, and oh, my stars !
He pokes her head between the bars,
And melts off half her nose !

Or the solemn imitation of the great Kantian prophet, moving rhythmically in such lines as these :—

My pensive Public ! wherefore look you sad ?
I had a grandmother—she kept a donkey !—

Making laughter and a thought of Coleridge for the first time, probably, simultaneous.

But the fine form of the Bard of Skiddaw himself, grave and Æschylean, like Strength or Force on their way to Prometheus with a message from Jupiter, passes across the field of vision, with eyes—but Mr. Hunt must describe them :

‘I have never beheld eyes that looked so inspired, so supernatural, as Wordsworth’s. They were like fires, half-burning, half-smouldering, with a sort of acrid fixture of regard, and seated at the further end of two caverns. Ezekiel or Isaiah might have had such eyes.’

Byron, too, was a prison visitor. ‘An elegant, spiritual head and face, with a proud stormy look about the brows.’ Thus he is sketched. And once—but this after his release—the poet of Rimini sees the pretty, earnest ‘pippin-face’ of Lady Byron, as she herself defined it.

Contrasting strongly with the refined, affected, *blasé*, Juanesque Byron appears the tall, solid figure of Coleridge, with his white hair, though but fifty, blanché and scorched by the inner fire of the brain. A great calm temple of thought, with heavy, indolent features, like those old Egyptian gods, still gazing upon the ages from their land of mystery. All but the eyes displayed this silent majesty. There the Soul sat, performing her magical incantations, while above them rose the prodigious forehead, ‘a great piece of placid marble,’ and the lips poured forth their fine and solemn monologues. ‘Give me to eternity new “Talk” by Coleridge, and new “Essays” by Charles Lamb!’ exclaims Leigh Hunt.

Sir Walter Scott and Leigh Hunt were never warm friends. By his ‘Feast of the Poets,’ published some time before his imprisonment, the latter had made all poets and poetlings his enemies. Scott, amongst others, was discontented with too little praise, for his genius was never rated as high by his brother-authors as by the public. Even in calm, cool prose Mr. Hunt pronounces him ‘a poet of a purely conventional order, warmed with a taste for old books; a critic more agreeable than subtle; a bitter, not a large-minded politician; but a third-rate Shakespeare, wanting the feminine side of genius—grace and music; and the least quotable for sententiousness, or wit, or any other memorable brevity, in the whole circle of illustrious writers.’

Coleridge is still more coldly critical. In one of his letters

he calls 'Ivanhoe' and the 'Bride of Lammermoor' 'those wretched abortions;' speaks of his translating into Leadenhall-Street-Minerva-Library-sentences the common incidents of 'D'Urfe and Scuderi;' asserts that 'not twenty lines of Scott's poetry will reach posterity; it has relation to nothing;' but that he is popular because 'his works amuse without requiring thought and without exciting deep emotion.' All true, perhaps. All this residuum may really have been left in the critic's crucible, yet still the subtle vital element of Scott's creations escapes all analysis. That magic vitality by which he swayed the hearts of all Europe, as no man ever moved them but Shakespeare, founded a School of Literature throughout all Europe, and so interpenetrated his country with his genius, civilising, giving it more impulse on the path of progress than a century of railroads could have done—glorifying all its natural loveliness with his ideal beauty, so that our bewildered senses scarcely distinguish the God-created from the Genius-superadded—stamping every mountain, from the North Sea to the Clyde, with his effigy (for not Athos alone has here been carved into an Alexander)—until Scotland for ever more to all the world means in its highest and proudest significance, the land of Scott.

Gifford, editor of 'The Quarterly Review,' was also indignant at the unceremonious manner in which he had been presented to Apollo in 'The Feast of the Poets.' The dramatists had just vanished—

All the worst playwrights from Dibdin to Terry,
when—

A hemming was heard, consequential and snapping,
And a sour little gentleman walked with a rap in.

'And pray,' cried the god in high glee,
'And pray, my frank visitor, who may you be?'
'Who be?' cried the other: 'why, really, this tone—
William Gifford's a name, I think, pretty well known!'
'Oh, now I remember,' said Phœbus, 'ah, true—
The Anti-La-Cruscan who writes the Review:
But, my visit just now is to poets alone,
And not to small critics, however well known.'

So saying, he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
And the sour little gentleman bowed himself out.

Of this 'small, bilious, and querulous-looking despot of Parnassus, this lover of small victims,' Mr. Hunt had indeed but a poor opinion, and says of him : 'He had not a particle of genius. He was only ill-natured and unscrupulous, and, like Attila, spared neither age nor sex.'

Gifford revenged himself as only reviewers can ; and for some other reasons the Whig 'Edinburgh' was equally cold in Leigh Hunt's praise, or, worse even, often quite silent. There is a pathos in Mr. Hunt's slight discomposure on the subject ; for it is a sad evil of our days that all talent, even the highest, is so dependent for recognition or oblivion upon the petty personal feelings, envies, and jealousies of reviewers. He says, innocently and sadly : 'I think the "Edinburgh Review" might have noticed my books a little oftener. I am sure it would have done me a great deal of worldly good by it, and itself no harm in these progressing days of criticism.' One thinks here of poor Southey's emotion at seeing his poems lying in piles, dusty, untouched, unsold, on the bookseller's shelves, and writing to Coleridge : 'Oh, puff me, Coleridge ; if you love me, puff me ; puff a couple of hundreds into my pocket, good Coleridge !'

The 'Story of Rimini' was written in prison. Strange inspiration for that sunny idyll, deepened to tragedy, as if a thunderstorm had suddenly gathered over a summer landscape. It is a tale old as six centuries, yet young with the eternal youth of passion—founded on that passing vision of Dante's, as he wandered through the eternal darkness of the Inferno ; that gleam of youth, beauty, and deathless love, flung like a rainbow on the midnight of hell. A tale older even than Dante—that of forbidden love, waiting but some poet's hand to unclasp the volume, and we find every page steeped in tears and inundated with beauty.

The story of Francesca, Count Guido's daughter, is given in full ; her fatal marriage with the old, deformed, hateful,

Lord of Rimini ; her fatal love for his young brother, Paulo, to whom she had been first affianced. Her life in her new home made bearable by that defiant resignation, so strong till tempted ; her saintly, though loveless life, yet not unloved, for Paulo was near her, her husband's guest at their castle, and his eyes spoke what his lips feared to utter :

Love by the object loved is soon discerned,
 And grateful pity is love half returned.
 Of pity for herself the rest was made
 Of first impressions and beliefs betrayed.
 Bright grew the morn whenever Paulo came ;
 The only word to write was either's name ;
 Soft in each other's presence fell their speech ;
 Each tho' they looked not, felt they saw but each ;
 'Twas day, 'twas night, as either came or went,
 And bliss was in two hearts with misery strangely blent.

The catastrophe is given almost in the words of Dante. Francesca one day, 'one gentle, autumn noon,' came to her accustomed haunt, where—

'Twas rugged trunks
 Throned in dark pillars up the gold green light,
 And fell to reading.
 'Twas 'Launcelot of the Lake,' a bright romance,
 Which, like a trumpet, made young pulses dance.

There she reads how the young Launcelot came to King Arthur's Court and displayed such knightly graces—

That what with all his charms of look and limb,
 The Queen Ginevra fell in love with him :—
 And here, such interest in the tale she took,
 Francesca's eyes went deeper in the book.

Ready she sat with one hand to turn o'er
 The leaf to which her thoughts ran on before,
 The other on the table, half enwreathed
 In the thick tresses over which she breath'd ;
 So sat she fixed, and so observed was she
 Of one who at the door stood tenderly—

' May I come in ? ' he said—it made her start—
That smiling voice : she coloured, press'd her heart
A moment, as for breath, and then with free
And usual tone, said : ' O, yes, certainly.'
There 's wont to be, at conscious times like these,
An affectation of a bright-eyed ease,
As if to seem so were to be secure.

With this the lovers met, with this they spoke,
With this sat down to read the self-same book,
And Paulo, by degrees, gently embraced
With one permitted hand her lovely waist ;
And both their cheeks like peaches on a tree,
Came with a touch together thrillingly,
And o'er the book they hung, and nothing said,
And every lingering page grew longer as they read.

As thus they sat, and felt with leaps of heart
Their colour change, they came upon the part
Where fond Ginevra, with her flame long nurst,
Smil'd upon Launcelot, when he kiss'd her first—
That touch at last through every fibre slid,
And Paulo turn'd, scarce knowing what he did,
Only he felt he could no more dissemble,
And kiss'd her, mouth to mouth all in a tremble.
Sad were those hearts, and sweet was that long kiss :
Sacred be love from sight whate'er it is ;
The world was all forgot, the struggle o'er,
Passionate the joy, that day they read no more.

With this—' *Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante*'—
Dante ends the tragedy ; but Mr. Hunt continues to the retri-
bution. The lovers are betrayed, and murdered by the fierce
Lord of Rimini :

What avail'd grief, strength, despair ?
Or what the two poor hands put forth in prayer ?
Hot is the dagger from the brother's heart,
Deep in the wife's—dead both and dashed apart—
Mighty the murderer felt as there they lay ;
Mighty, for one huge moment, o'er his prey ;
Then, like a drunken man, he rode away.

Much of the mournful beauty of ' *Parasina*,' of which the
golden-haired Guiccioli was the heroine-original, evidently was

suggested by this 'Story of Rimini;' and younger poets caught the echo of its fanciful, capricious music, and set their thoughts to it lovingly.

In 1821, the 'Examiner' having declined in popularity, Shelley invited Mr. Hunt to join him and Byron in Italy, and set up a Liberal paper in concert. The periodical did not succeed, though how it failed with such men as Shelley, Hazlitt and Hunt for contributors is a marvel. However, to Leigh Hunt's residence in Italy we are indebted for some brilliant sketches of Italian scenery and Italian humanity; not that he admires either much. The best of its scenery, he thinks, exists chiefly in the 'Landscape Annual,' and the beauty of these children of the sun in our own imaginations. But he can write well about everything, fling rich colours on his canvas, and while wandering through these Italian towns, whose very names are music, sketch Italian women for us like a Titian, with their stately 'peacock' walk, that Petrarch lauds in his 'Laura'—so Volumnia might have trod the pavement of old Rome—and their eyes, full of love's own fire—with such Juliet may have gazed on Romeo. Yet they are not handsome as a race; though passion, when earnest and deep, as in these Italian natures, will always give a certain wild beauty and meaning to a countenance—a glowing, illuminating, irradiating splendour. Premature old age, however, is the penalty for the sun's warm kisses, and 'no ugliness can equal the aged ugliness of Italy.'

Neither are the vines a lovely object, though they trail so beautifully in verse and tourists' note-books; and much of the horizon sweep of the eye is flat, monotonous, dusty, sun-burned—yet, over all the variegated, picturesque, moving human life beneath, springs the bright azure dome of Heaven—an atmosphere where painters learn to paint. What have we to do with Art in our dull mist-woven sky? We, who have never seen a colour, who know not what it is, until perchance some day the scarlet *berrettas* of the Neapolitan fishermen flash on us between the silver waves and the blue sky, and

we then may comprehend what scarlet is, and feel with a heart-throb that it is like the sound of a trumpet.

But we have pictures of still grander mould in these sketches. Shelley is drawn well, with his profound religious instincts ; profound sympathy with humanity, that could not look on pain or misery—ever striving to rush with soul and fortune to the-rescue ; his passionate love of all nature—wood, water, sun, and stars ; his artist love of beauty, which led him to place the sculptured forms of the Vatican Apollo and the Phidian Venus in his study, that he might think and write before them, beauty intoxicated ; a grave, serious, inspired nature, suiting well with his seraph-face—all beauty, grace, music, love, lit up by his large wild eyes, immortal eyes, and shadowed by his rich, flowing hair.

He was then but twenty-nine, and married to his second wife, the beautiful, intellectual, but calm, cold, emotionless daughter of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, who seemed to look at all life through a passionless medium, neither experiencing pleasure nor regret.

His first wife, from whom he had parted, destroyed herself previous to his second happier marriage.

Leigh Hunt found him living a pure, hermit, poet life in Italy, neither tasting meat nor wine—feeding on light and air chameleon-like. But the doom had already gone forth against him. In a few weeks after, his ‘frail form’ was mingling with the elements, a portion of the nature he worshipped ; and his ‘pard-like spirit, beautiful and swift,’ had entered ‘behind the veil’ which his daring hand had so often vainly tried to lift. Leigh Hunt was one of those who witnessed the last strange, impressive scenes of his fatal destiny—the storm, the antique funereal rites, and the burial in the capital of the universe, beside the Adonais he had immortalised.

After Shelley’s death Byron grew tired of Italy. Love, genius and celebrity all fatigued him. He longed to live in action, no longer in poetry ; then the Greek fire came to warm his blood, and he went forth to the land which gave him life,

but death likewise. So he sleeps at Missolonghi, crowned with the laurel and the bay.

Leigh Hunt returned to England. The 'Liberal' had failed ; but, untiringly, he raised up new periodicals and wrote a novel for bread—yes, literally living on the payment, chapter by chapter. This novel of need was 'Sir Ralph Essher,' a fragment of life taken from the reign of the 'Merry Monarch,' and full of brilliant Court pictures ; but, as a whole, devoid of interest, and rather unreadable. Prose, he says himself, he writes with a headache ; but verse comes calmly, pleasantly, and spontaneously, as if music were his nature.

Still he had to work at the periodical ephemera for subsistence. Southey knew something of this degrading necessity—this conscious suicide of all the highest mental powers ; and Coleridge, too, for he complains bitterly in one of his letters of 'this "periodical" writing for bread'—'picking blackberries for chance customers ;' and when his soul is 'full of great thoughts for fame and the world, being condemned to scribble an article for "Blackwood" for money.'

But Leigh Hunt, though accepting the necessity of the age, and content to write for the passing hour, yet threw vitality into all he touched, incarnated some portion of his nature, and sent forth nothing to the public that did not tend to make it wiser and better.

While inspired by Italy, he wrote that charming and unrivalled poem, 'Bacchus in Tuscany,' where the verse dances, wild as a chorus of Bacchantes, and pours down a dithyrambic torrent of sweet words, submerging the very soul in cascades of the purple Nepenthe.

His lyrics, too, gush forth with a spontaneous melody, like the carol of birds. 'The Song of the Flowers,' for instance, beginning :—

We are the sweet flowers,
Born of sunny showers,
Think, whene'er you see us what our beauty saith ;
Utterance mute and bright,
Of some unknown delight,
We fill the air with pleasure by our simple breath,

All who see us, love us ;
 We befit all places ;
 Unto sorrows we give smiles, and unto graces, graces.
 See, and scorn all duller
 Taste, how Heaven loves colour—
 How great nature, clearly, joys in red and green ;
 What sweet thoughts she thinks,
 Of violets and pinks,
 And a thousand flashing hues, made solely to be seen.
 See her whitest lilies chill the silver showers,
 And what a red mouth has her Rose, the Woman of the Flowers !

In a graver style is a sonnet, entitled 'An Angel in the House,' where a beautiful thought shines in perfect setting :—

How sweet it were if, without feeble fright,
 Or dying of the dreadful, beauteous sight,
 An Angel came to us, and we could bear
 To see him issue from the silent air,
 At evening in our room, and bend on ours
 His divine eyes, and bring us from his bowers
 News of dear friends, and children who have never
 Been dead indeed,—as we shall know for ever.
 Alas ! we know not what we daily see
 About our hearths—Angels that are to be,
 Or may be if they will, and we prepare
 Their souls and ours to meet in happy air—
 A child, a friend, a wife, whose soft heart sings
 In unison with ours, breeding its future wings.

His play, 'The Legend of Florence,' had great success when acted ; but the reading merely does not move one much, though the tale is one of pathos, and the blank verse always rich and sonorous. Perhaps it wants variety of incidents. The heroine does nothing but weep till she dies, and when she comes to life again from her deadly trance the curtain falls, precisely and tantalisingly at the moment of highest interest, when the pale grave-risen Ginevra has to decide between the husband, the lover, and the convent. Did the poet fear to take the responsibility of her selection ?

So Leigh Hunt passed to old age, still working energetically for light and progress, with the fine-edged tools of intel-

lect God had given him. And the home light rested long upon his house, of which he has so touchingly sung in those sweet lines addressed to his wife, entitled :—

A HEAVEN UPON EARTH

For there are two Heavens, sweet,
Both made of love—one inconceivable
Even by the other, so divine it is ;
The other, far on this side of the stars,
By men called *Home*, where some blest pair are met
As we are now ; each at its gentle task
Of book, or household need, or meditation,
By summer noon or curtained fire in frost ;
And by degrees there come—not always come,
Yet mostly—other smaller inmates there,
Cherubic-faced, yet growing like these two.

And so 'twixt joy

And love, and tears, and whatsoever pain
Man fitly shares with man, these two grow old ;
And if, indeed, blest thoroughly, they die
In the same spot and nigh the same good hour,
And setting suns look heavenly on their grave.

WORDSWORTH

WORDSWORTH's long life was not passed in vain for humanity. As an apostle of the Divine, a light-bringer to his age, leading many souls up from darkness to the serene harmony of the higher spiritual life, the great poet nobly fulfilled his mission and left the impress of his genius indelibly stamped on the literature of his country. Then he passed away, not in gloom but glory. He went forth by the gate of victory to the tomb.

Wordsworth's outer life was singularly uneventful. No trials or sorrows touched him, no torturing and ignoble poverty, that usual martyrdom of genius, and no suffering in the home life, till the death of his daughter shadowed his last years with the darkness of grief.

Except two short visits to the Continent and an excursion to Scotland, which he has immortalised in verse, his whole life was passed peacefully amid the tranquil and beautiful scenery of the English lakes. From them he drew his inspiration; they are now and for ever associated with his name, and there he died, at his far-famed residence, Rydal Mount, just as he had completed his eightieth year.

There is an idea current that brain-work kills sooner than hand-work; yet Goethe and Chateaubriand, both contemporaries of Wordsworth, equalled him in years. Calderon, also, lived to eighty, and Carlyle may now be added to the instances of extreme longevity in great authors.

But the passionate poets seem to die younger than the reflective—Burns, at thirty-seven; Byron, thirty-six; Shelley, at thirty; and Keats, at twenty-five. There are some singular

circumstances also observable in the Avatar of Genius in the world. The phenomena of its appearance seem to follow some definite laws. A rush of the Divine Spirit comes breathing on a generation, imparting some special gift that gives an onward impulse to the human soul in one particular path, which advance is a permanent conquest. The soul discovers its capabilities, and is henceforth never content with efforts that do not equal this revealed perfection. All the great painters of the Middle Ages came together. So did the great dramatists of English literature. And the chief musicians belong to one age. Between these Pentecosts of genius are the eras of imitation, which last until the thoughts of the great masters are diluted and filtered through every heart, and the soul, languishing for new food, is prepared to try its wings on some other path.

Sometimes the spirit of one age is continued by a representative in the next, through a kind of psychological descent, as if the metempsychosis were not a mere Hindu fiction, and that souls did reappear on earth to fulfil the working out of the ideas they had begun to develop while in another human form. Thus Newton was born the year Galileo died; Wordsworth the same year that Akenside died—the poet of all others with whom his spirit has strongest affinities. Akenside died young, at forty-nine. His genius was not powerful enough to work alone with visible effect upon the materialistic tendencies of his century. He dies, and the same spirit comes forth again in Wordsworth, strong to battle for the right and conquer, assisted by such a band of co-workers as Truth never before had on her side in one age.

Spenser, Milton, Pope, and Wordsworth head the four great epochs of English poetry—each different in modes of thought and modes of utterance. Spenser leads the Saxon school. His verse affords the richest specimens of the mediæval mind—gorgeous and decorated as the florid Gothic architecture of the period.

His influence reigned down to Milton, when the Latin style became the favourite of that severe, learned, scholastic, theological age. The Restoration was the transition period

between that and Pope, when French taste predominated, and literature was distinguished for cultured elegance but shallow thought.

The writers of that age have the sole merit of having brought the language to a state of high perfection—made it a graceful and flexible medium for the interchange of social thought (as far as its inherent rudeness and roughness will permit), for it must be confessed that English, in preceding ages, was but a clumsy instrument wherewith to convey the delicate and subtle elegancies of conversation. Fifty years after Pope, Cowper commenced the reaction against the French artificial school ; but no great poet—(for Cowper only wrote excellent common sense in rhyme)—intervenes between Pope and Wordsworth, when the Teutonic influence began to be felt, and that increased depth of thought and power in utterance characterised our literature, which is always the result the nearer we approach the Teutonic element and recede from the Latin in our language.

The French Revolution closed the eighteenth century with a chaos, in which faith, reverence, custom, law and tradition were engulfed and all existing ideas shattered. Man, like the first man, stood in life without a past, and plunged deep into his own soul, its passion-world, its sense-world, its faith and spirit-world, to construct new systems in the void. Powerful guides were needed then for the human race, and three men appeared, in three different countries, adequate to the task—three men of exalted faith, hope, and mental strength, that no rush of circumstances could make swerve from the truth. Like the three advanced stars of the great stellar car, they led the chariot of human thought through the wide fields of drifting space, round the fixed polar-star of eternal truth. These men were Goethe, Chateaubriand, and Wordsworth. They all worked together in one cause—on the one plank of time, and all lived to see their work bear fruit. It was they who held up the human mind from sinking utterly in that terrible abyss into which atheism and emancipated passions had nearly hurled the soul of man. And foot to foot they waged war against the desolating influences of the age

Each of these men had numerous co-workers, but they reigned supreme. Never in England was seen a more splendid array of genius than that which stood with Wordsworth upon the summit of the nineteenth century and plunged down its dark depths, carrying light, truth, faith, reverence to the coming years. His contemporaries have never been surpassed in any age or any land—Walter Scott, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Moore, Southey, Lamb, Walter Savage Landor, and, of minor names, a race that would alone have made an age famous—Keats, Kirke White, Hogg, Hemans, Landon, Hood, Heber, Ebenezer Elliott ; and these are but a fragment of the list. Every one of these writers was born after Wordsworth ; but all died before him, except Moore and Landor. Never was there a more noble guild of poets ; and all of them, how opposite soever their paths of action may seem, yet worked together to build up the one temple—truth. All aided to advance the progress of the human soul. Walter Scott taught reverence, which is the first step to faith. Byron spoke the want of every young heart. His literature of despair was the anguished cry of a God-bereft humanity seeking its lost hope and immortality.

Nations are like individuals. They pass from doubt to faith ; but the transit is the most fearful phase of a human life. It is the desert from Egypt to Canaan. Byron was the poet of this transition state—the incarnation of his own era. The corroding wretchedness, the unsatisfied aspirations, the infinite yearnings of the human heart found in him their complete utterance. Byron's mission was to awaken, not to teach. He was the poet of doubt, showing man to himself amid the icy glaciers of an uncomprehended present and a silent future. Coleridge and Wordsworth, the deepest minds of the age, were unheeded at the very time that Byron reigned in the zenith, because the human soul was not yet fitted to receive their teaching. Shelley was the interpreter of the awakened soul of man. With an almost phrenetic agony he searched the universe for the resolution into harmony of the dissonance which alone Byron had struck. A deep mystic

sorrow for ever brooded over his God-sick spirit, raging with desire to find an infinite object for his infinite love ; and though he seemed, by his reckless scorn of creeds and dogmas of religion, to impel the soul of man still further from the sun of truth, he was even then but accelerating its progress to plunge into the light again. Byron and Shelley had thus made man feel his misery ; his need of something beyond the passion-world and sense-world for happiness. Then Wordsworth's reign began. His voice was listened to while he solved the problem which Byron and Shelley could only utter. His calm, divine spirit seemed a clear mirror, in which God was reflected as in the pages of inspiration ; and his words were like the mystic western wind, commissioned to breathe on the dry bones that they should live. His genius, like an electric flash, passed through the dark opaque of human existence, at once rendering it diaphanous ; and as through a crystal wall men beheld the life within the life—the inner spiritual which lies hid beneath the rude external material, the true life of which the outward is but the transitory accessory. 'The whole outer world,' says Schleiermacher, 'is an allegory, a lofty allegory, of the inner world—man is eternal, life but a passing vibration.' Wordsworth was the interpreter of this lofty allegory—

With mind that sheds a light on what he sees.

He had the spiritual vision which sees through the heart of things, and he stood face to face with the primal eternal idea shrined in them. Unheeded, scorned, preaching to deaf adders, like all divine men when they first go forth on their mission, so he passed many years ; but, unlike most of the gifted, he lived to that futurity which all genius anticipates, and assisted at his own apotheosis. The earliest of his published poems were written when he was only seventeen. These were followed by lyrical ballads, all bearing the same peculiar characteristics that marked the productions of his maturer years. Speaking of himself he says :—

Wisdom and spirit of the universe !
From my first dawn

Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that built up our human soul,
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things—
 With life and nature purifying these,
 And sanctifying by such discipline
 Both pain and fear, until we recognise
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

His ballad of 'Peter Bell,' published in 1819, but written long before, excited a storm of ridicule, and yet it is one of the finest in the language. The only point open to satire is the appellation of the hero and his calling, both of which have certainly an anti-poetical effect in this stanza :—

There sit the vicar and his dame,
 And there my good friend, Stephen Otter,
 And ere the light of evening fail
 To them I must relate the tale
 Of Peter Bell the Potter.

Had he been called Conrad the Corsair the public, no doubt, would have received the poem with rapture. Wordsworth's great work, the one on which his fame rests, 'The Excursion,' was published when he was forty-four. Here again the selection of 'a superannuated pedlar' for his hero, exposed him to the keenest satire. Yet the personality of his hero is but a shadow. The work throughout is a transcript of the workings of the human soul under different trials, treated with a metaphysical power and acuteness which is unsurpassed in the English language—the human soul as it exists alike in king and peasant, not modified or contracted by any outer circumstances of position.

Wordsworth, indeed, seems incapable of contracting his own mind to the limits of an ordinary individual : he draws not men but Man. What he has uttered will be true as long as our race exists, independent of all circumstances. With plebeian names and callings he introduces no narrow, circumscribed, vulgar thoughts. His pedlar talks and reasons as Plato

might before an assembly of kings. Through all these shadowy personalities, which are little more than mere appellations, it is the great philosopher and poet who is himself speaking to us. His poems are thoroughly subjective, filled with that sublime egoism of genius which one so readily pardons, for it is the revelation of our own higher nature, too often world-shrouded. He has transfused into all beautiful forms the emotions of the different phases of his life as they swept over the mirror of his own mind. His poems are his psychological biography, for his genius is abstractive, profound, analytical, not creative. Every page of his works proves the serious and solemn awe with which he contemplated the soul of man as the only true life whose history was worth a record. All external relations and positions, rank, title, dignity, were to him but fleeting, unreal dreams. He says :—

Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus
Can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often, when we look
Into our minds, into the mind of man,
My haunt and the main region of my song.

Nature has more vital sympathies with his soul than the toiling, turbulent world. In 'The Wanderer' he describes the emotions of his own youth :—

While yet a child
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness. . . : The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could he read
Unutterable love. Sound, needed none,
Nor any voice of joy ; his spirit drank
The spectacle. Sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him ; they swallowed up
His animal being. In them did he live,
And by them did he live ; they were his life.
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith,
All things there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving ; infinite

There littleness was not ; the least of things
 Seemed infinite :
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive !

In the lines on Tintern Abbey this passionate love of nature is still more beautifully expressed :—

I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms were then to me
 An appetite, a feeling, and a love
 That had no need of a remoter charm
 Unborrowed from the eye.

But to this sensuous pleasure was added a deeper sympathy in maturer years :—

For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity.

And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
 A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things.

Here the true poet sees not only the beauty of each symbol in nature, but its significance, and whether eternal or evanescent, each symbol speaks to his soul. In one of the sonnets to the river Duddon there is this noble thought :—

Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide,
 The form remains, the function never dies ;
 While we, the brave, the mighty and the wise,
 We men, who in our morn of youth defied

The elements, must vanish. Be it so !
 Enough, if something from our hands have power
 To live and act and serve the future hour ;
 And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
 Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

Yet he is no stranger to the agonistical destiny of humanity—this 'eternal objective Christ'—to use Schelling's phrase—'in whom the mortal and the God are ever warring.' How the human soul with its weaknesses and aspirations flows freely out in these lines :—

'Tis by comparison an easy task
 Earth to despise ; but to converse with Heaven—
 This is not easy : to relinquish all
 We have or hope of happiness or joy,
 And stand in freedom loosened from the world,
 I deem not arduous ; but must needs confess
 That 'tis a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul's desires ;
 And the most difficult of tasks *to keep*
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.

Again, still working out the same thought, he exclaims :—

Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
 This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs
 Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
 For any passion of the soul that leads to ecstasy.

Then he teaches how the soul may be assisted in the conflict, in a passage of the divinest philosophy :—

But, above all, the victory is most sure
 For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
 To yield entire submission to the law
 Of conscience—conscience revered and obeyed
 As God's most intimate presence in the soul
 And his most perfect image in the world.

By these helps

Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away
 With only such degree of sadness left

As may support longings of pure desire
 And strengthen love, *rejoicing secretly*
In the sublime attractions of the grave.

Everything that aids this progression of the soul, even suffering, is welcomed by him, of which these lines are a noble illustration :—

Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
 The motion of a muscle—this way or that
 'Tis done ; and in the after vacancy
 We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed :
 Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
 And has the nature of infinity.
 Yet through that darkness gracious openings lie
 By which the soul, with patient steps of thought,
 Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer,
 May pass in hope, and though from mortal bonds
 Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
 Even to the fountain-head of peace divine.

Of his power as a poet, in all the combined brilliancy of grandeur of thought and glorious beauty of utterance, the 'Intimations of Immortality' would be the best evidence. Nothing in our language equals these few lines, already consecrated in many a heart :—

There was a time when meadows, grove, and stream,
 The earth and every common sight
 To me did seem
 Apparell'd in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
 It is not now as it hath been of yore :
 Turn wheresoe'er I may
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
 And lovely is the rose ;
 The moon doth with delight
 Look round her, when the heavens are bare.
 Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair ;

The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Our birth is but a sleep, and a forgetting ;
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But, trailing clouds of glory, do we come
 From God, who is our home.

Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing boy ;
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy.
 The youth who daily farther from the East
 Must travel still, is Nature's priest.
 And by the vision splendid,
 Is on his way attended :
 At length the man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

Wordsworth's style is clear and idiomatic—earnest and impressive, but never passionate—perfectly harmonious, but seldom lyrical. His ideas are often condensed like equations. He affects no imagery, no illustrations, yet sometimes one word will bring to the mind a whole attendant train of the sublimest images, as in that line—

Trailing clouds of glory do we come.

His thoughts speak so directly to the human soul that he has no need of images, which are but pictures held up to the senses to complete what language left deficient in the utterance of the thought. The most perfect writer is he who can find the most perfect formula for an idea, and who, consequently, leaves nothing unexpressed to be supplied with a picture.

There is a stately meditative beauty about many of his

minor poems, particularly where woman is the subject, as if he viewed the sex not only with graceful human tenderness but with reverence. Amongst the most remarkable is the one with this fine opening :—

How rich that forehead's calm expanse !
How bright that heaven-directed glance !

And another, not less striking, in the commencement, for Wordsworth excels in the first lines of his minor poems and sonnets :—

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare—
The sun has burned her coal-black hair.
Her eyebrow had a rusty stain,
And she was far from over the main.

A gipsy is sketched with these Murillo tints :—

Her skin was of Egyptian brown—
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown—
She towered—fit person for a queen,
To lead these ancient Amazonian files,
Or ruling bandit's wife amid the Grecian isles.
The creature
Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious feature !

Softer is this picture :—

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn ;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, to waylay.

I saw her, upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too !
Her household motions, light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty ;

A creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food ;
 Nor transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine,
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
 A perfect woman, nobly planned
 To warn, to comfort, to command ;
 And yet a spirit still and bright
 With something of an angel light.

In a poem entitled 'The Triad' there is another fine portrait :—

Her brow hath opened on me—see it there
 Brightening the umbrage of her hair ;
 So gleams the crescent moon that loves
 To be descried through shady groves.
 Tenderest bloom is on her cheek,
 Wish not for a richer streak,
Nor dread the depth of meditative eye ;
 But let thy love upon that azure field
 Of thoughtfulness and beauty yield
 Its homage offered up in purity.

This poem was written when Wordsworth was fifty-eight, a proof that advancing age had in no degree chilled the genial flow of feeling nor deadened susceptibility. Up to sixty-five he continued his publications still in the same track he had commenced at seventeen. No sarcasm had ever made him yield one of his poetic theories. He waited, patiently and confidently, till the mind of man grew to his stature. He was conscious that 'an *original* writer must *create* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed, and must reconcile himself for a season to but few and scattered hearers.' He lived for thirty-five years after penning that phrase, and saw himself not only throned as the first and chief poet of the century, but the founder of the entire modern school of poetry, and inspirer of

all our more thoughtful literature, whether in prose or verse. Strange destiny for one whose verses were received for many a year, as he himself testifies, 'with contempt and aversion,' though, at the same time, he acknowledges that they had in them enough of the 'vision and the faculty divine' to insure him a permanent place in English literature.

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY

I. 'FESTUS'

It seems strange that the name of one of England's greatest modern poets should already have passed almost into oblivion ; yet, when it first appeared, Bailey's wonderful poem of 'Festus' was received with rapture ; and soon after passed through six successive editions with a ceaseless chorus of enthusiastic praise.

He was but twenty-three, with life at blood heat, when the young poet poured forth this passionate torrent of thought and inspiration, and startled society with his new reading of life's dark problems, as if he were preaching a new religion, yet now all seems forgotten. No new editions of his works appear, and 'Festus' is no longer quoted or even named by the omniscient critics and writers of the press, although the poem still remains unsurpassed in the literature of the age for depth, beauty, and sublime spiritual insight.

Perhaps the author may never be a popular poet ; for a serious, reflective spirit, a soaring heavenward nature, a devout, believing attitude towards the mystic unseen world, are all requisite for him who would comprehend, and fully absorb into his mind the whole meaning and mystery of Mr. Bailey's great work. Deep thinkers speak only to high and lofty minds, and by such only can be interpreted.

Wordsworth was the least read of English poets by the masses, while Byron was found everywhere, down to the parlour

window of an inn ; and Tennyson's sweet, silvery earth music is in every heart, while Bailey in vain

Sweeps from end to end the world's great chord.

None but those who are spiritually related to him seem to hear the tones.

It is not the weak mind feels the great mind's might ;
None but the great can test it. Does the oak
Or reed feel the strong storm most ?

In a very beautiful scene where Festus and his friends discourse of 'Bards and Poesie' we obtain some glimpses of his nature as described by himself, and penetrate the soul of the artist through his work. His life seems to have been prematurely saddened, gloom to have risen up like an opaque wall between him and the world, to force his eyes heavenward, towards the light that cometh from above.

Earthlike, no sooner made than marred. Though young,
He wrote amid the ruins of his heart.

Of the formation of his spiritual nature we read :—

He had no times of study, and no place ;
All places and all times to him were one.
His soul was like the wind harp which he loved,
And sounded only when the spirit blew.

All things were inspiration unto him—
Wood, wold, hill, field, sea, city, solitude,
And crowds, and streets, and man, where'er he was,
And the blue eye of God which is above us.
All things to him bare thoughts of minstrelsy.

The world is full of glorious likenesses—
The poet's power is to sort these out,
And to make music from the common strings
With which the world is strung.

Thus the divine effluence interpenetrated his soul through nature, which is the divine mind made visible by symbols ;

and to look on beauty became with him a need, a thirst, a passion :—

He knew himself a bard ordained
More than inspired, by God inspirited,
Making himself like an electric rod
A lure for lightning feelings; and his words
Felt like the things that fall in thunder.
He spoke to spirits with a spirit tongue,
And rayed them round him from the ends of heaven.
For spirits wing about to wait on us
While yet the hour of enchantment is,
And we can force them to our bidding.

And he raised
The rebel in himself, and in his mind
Walked with him through the world.

These lines contain the origin and scope of 'Festus.' It is all life concentrated in a single soul ; all being—God, angels, man, fiend. They divide the empire within, and rule, and combat, and conquer by turns. All states are mirrored like wise in this one soul—earth, heaven, hell—for each has a subjective reality within man, as well as an objective reality without him. The hero is the world-man, as he stands related to eternity, not to social life. The history is that of the immortal soul, in all its moods, passions, and aspirations, through trials and temptations, breathed into time. The stage of the drama is life in its fullest development through love, joy, knowledge, passion, pleasure, power ; and the aim is to prove, that through all things the soul is disciplined, even by sin itself, *but can never finally be lost.* That whatever power evil gains over it, the power of God is stronger and can redeem ; that all evil has its mission, and works out the will of God, yet is but finite, for that it is impossible sin and suffering could be eternally antagonistic to Almighty love and power. Thus the enigma of the existence of evil is solved. Suffering, he assumes, is not sent for punishment, but trial ; pain is punishment, not for vengeance but purification ; and the object of all pain and woe on earth is an assaying process by which men's souls are saved.

There is a very beautiful Hindu legend concerning the

origin of our race, which tells how we are the fallen angels of heaven, doomed to the earthly life of expiation for our rebellion against the Most High, but for whom this life is also to be one of redemption. When the lost angel bows his head beneath the portal of the tomb, he lifts it again beyond it, to re-enter the golden gate of heaven. Mr. Bailey's theory is somewhat similar. He maintains that purification, redemption, and final salvation are contained in the primal idea of life :—

Evil and good are God's right hand and left.
By ministry of evil good is clear,
And of temptation, virtue : as of yore
Out of the grave rose God.

Nothing is lost in nature ; and no soul,
Though buried in the centre of all sin,
Is lost to God ; but there it works his will
And acts conformably.

Nor power, nor knowledge, love nor pleasure, makes
The heaven-affianced spirit false to God.
Though Doubt for aye may triumph, and Despair
Lead the soul blindfold to the edge of hell.

Many striking passages illustrate this dogma, that evil is not eternal. Tyranny forces a reaction to liberty ; superstition to truth ; poverty and misery awaken the noble deeds, words, and works of pity and compassion. Always from sin and evil comes the reaction of the soul a thousandfold more energetically back to God ; for all life has come forth from Him, and all spirit aspires to return to Him. Being a portion of His own nature, the soul is incapable of permanent alloy. Progression, not retrogression, is the law of our spiritual nature :—

Step by step, and throne by throne, we rise
Continually towards the infinite ;
And ever nearer—never near—to God.

Through all sin, through all excesses of pleasure the soul may seek an object to still its infinite desires, but in no case

can be made happy by these things : sin never yet satisfied an immortal human heart. Such is the theology of the poem.

Satan is drawn as a passive, not a malignant spirit ; an instrument of God necessary to the divine scheme of human redemption : searching by temptation whether any soul will be found content with less than God. This picture of the angel of suffering and woe, the passive instrument of God, working out his will through temptation, as Christ through love, is grand, solemn, and touching ; and more in accordance with our idea of the limitless power of God than Milton's idea of a spirit of evil rival in power, and like him eternal in duration. Festus asks wherefore he seeks to destroy men's souls. Lucifer answers :—

It is my part.

Woe here, woe there, woe, woe everywhere !
It is not for me to know, nor thou, the end
Of evil. I inflict and thou must bear.
The arrow knoweth not its end and aim,
And I keep rushing, ruining along
Like a great river rich with dead men's souls,
For if I knew I might rejoice ; and that
To me by nature is forbidden. I know
Nor joy nor sorrows ; but a changeless tone
Of sadness like the night-wind's is the strain
Of what I have of feeling. I am not
As other spirits ; but a solitude
Even to myself. I the Sole Spirit, sole.

Lucifer is in fact the embodiment of the unsanctified intellect with all the doubt, cold, walled-round egoism, mistrust, and unbelief, which are its characteristics, apart from the love and faith which alone can bring a soul into communion with God, or what is the same thing, into a life of eternal light and joy.

The spirit of doubt within man is the ever-present demon :—

All are devils to themselves
And every man his own great foe.
It is men who are deceivers, not the devil.

The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat
Oneself. All sin is easy after that.

And hell in man is the spirit of despondency and gloom
which sin and unbelief generate :—

An ever-great'ning sense of ill and woe
By crushing down the soul but filling never
Its infinite capacity for pain.

Hell is God's justice—Heaven is his love !
Probe the profound of thine own nature, man,
And thou mayest see reflected ev'n in life,
The Worlds, the Heavens, the Ages.

In the poem this inner universe is laid bare—the veil is rent. We see the soul of Festus, type of all souls, the battleground of God and Satan. Heaven and hell the reward of each act. Heaven, the freedom, peace and glory of a will conformable to God ; hell, doubt, gloom, fear, despondency, despair ! The soul dead *in* sin is in hell already in this world. The soul dead *to* sin has sprung from the tomb and ascended through the resurrection of Faith and Repentance into heaven, which is the new life of holiness and love. Heaven is

The consciousness of happiness and power.
Prayer, faith, and a pure heart can draw down heaven.

And yet is heaven a bright reality
As this or any of yon worlds. A state
Where all is loveliness and power and love.
Where all sublimest qualities of mind
Not infinite are limited alone
By the surrounding Godhead. And where naught
But what produceth glory and delight
To creature and Creator is ;—where all
Enjoy entire dominion o'er themselves—
Acts, feelings, thoughts, conditions, qualities,
Spirit and soul and mind—all under God,
For spirit is soul deified.

In the first scene Festus is drawn doubting, despairing, wearied with the hollow vanities of the world, longing, like all youth, for the cataract-like rush of life ; for more love,

more freedom, power, spiritual and temporal, than is permitted to man. He is discontented and *ambitious* (the malady of youth and genius), ready even to take the path of sin, so as it leads to power. Yet is it a noble ambition, though reckless of means :—

It matters not how long we live, but how.

God of might,

We love and live on power, it is the spirit's goal.

Mind must subdue—to conquer is its life.

Why mad'st thou not one spirit like the sun,

To king the world ? and, oh ! might I have been

That sun-mind, how I would have warmed the world

To love, and worship, and high life !

It is then Lucifer appears to him, the shadow of his own thought, pride, ambition, self-trust, impatience of destiny. He is the rebel spirit of man's own heart, seeking to build up a throne to reign, a heaven to enjoy, independent of God.

The tempting and redeeming influences are symbolised by female characters through the work, in accordance with the doctrine which teaches the mysterious agency of woman, in both the fall and the redemption of the human race. Woman lost the world, but woman was mother of the Redeemer who saved the world.

Angela is the first love of Festus. She represents the spirit of faith, love, and trust. The holy spirit of first youth, when all is aspiration towards the Good, the Beautiful, and the Lofty. She had died just before Lucifer appears, and Festus thus describes her :—

I loved her, for that she was beautiful ;
And that to me she seemed to be all nature,
And all varieties of things in one.
Would set at night in clouds of tears, and rise
All light and laughter in the morning : fear
No petty customs nor appearances,
But think what others only dreamed about,
And say what others did but think, and do
What others would but say, and glory in

What others dared not do ; so pure withal
 In soul, in heart, and act, such conscious, yet
 Such careless innocence, she made round her
 A halo of delight.

But now that all the illusions of bold, beautiful, and defiant youth have passed away, he feels the intense weariness of life—the agonised longing for death even, since it would bring to him something new and untried in existence. And he says :—

It is wretchedness or recklessness alone
 Keeps us alive. I like to think on death—
 It is but the appearance of an apparition.
 Give me the long, high-bounding feel of life,
 Which cries, ‘Let me but leap unto my grave,
 And I’ll not mind the when nor where—
 Oh ! I should love to die.’

Then comes this fine passage on the true worth of life :—

And yet men love to live
 As if mere life were worth their living for.
 Life’s more than breath and the quick round of blood :
 It is a great spirit and a busy heart.
 The coward and the small in soul scarce live.
 One generous feeling—one great thought—one deed
 Of good ere night, would make life longer seem
 Than if each year might number thousand days.
We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breath ;
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
 Life’s but a means unto an end.
 Why will we live and not be glorious ?
 We never can be deathless till we die.
 It is the dead win battles.

Then he longs to learn the mystery of mind ; to lift the future’s sable shroud ; to leave the impress of his soul in some great deed :—

Oh ! the brave and good who serve
 A worthy cause can only one way fail
 By perishing therein. Is it to fail ?

No : every great or good man's death is a step
Firm set towards the end.
The world must have great minds, even as great spheres
To govern lesser minds.
To live in light, or die in light-like dew,
Either. I should be blest.

Clara next takes possession of his heart. She is the spirit of truth, of pure-love that would elevate the object it loves. She tells him :—

I cannot sing the lightsome lays of love.
Many thou knowest who can; but none that can
Love thee as I do—for I love thy soul;
And I would save it, Festus !

She paints true bliss—the life of high calm souls, shining and pure as the gold gates of heaven :—

High above cloud and storm of life,
All peace, and power, and passionless purity,
A boundless scope—a high uplifted life !
Man, like the air-born eagle, who remains
Only on earth to feed, or sleep, or die,
But whose delight is on his lonely wing,
Wide sweeping as a mind—immortal man
Rushes aloft, right upwards into heaven.

And though existence has but one main sorrow—life :—

For what can Spirit severed from its God
Feel but a grievous longing to rejoin
Its infinite—its author—and its end ?
Yet is life a thing to be beloved
And honoured holily, and bravely borne.

After Clara leaves him, Lucifer returns. The chill ice breath of doubt once more passes over his mind, and his life is

Like a cold column in the sunshine
Projecting darkness.

Under the guidance of the Spirit of Evil he traverses the earth and universe, and tries to find the infinite to still his

soul's yearning, by plunging into the gulf of reckless enjoyment :—

Let me but look on aught which casts
The shadow of a pleasure, and here I bare
A breast which would embrace a bride of fire.
Oh ! give me to the young, the fair, the free—
The brave who would breast a rushing, burning world
Which came between them and their hearts' delight.
None but the brave and beautiful can love.
Oh ! for the young heart like a fountain playing !
Flinging its bright fresh feeling to the skies
It loves and strives to reach—strives, loves in vain :
It is of earth, and never meant for heaven.

Oh ! it is great to feel we care for nothing—
That hope, nor love, nor fear, nor aught of earth,
Can check the royal lavishment of life ;
But like a streamer strown upon the wind,
We fling our souls to fate and to the future.

His next love, Helen, is the type of earthly passion to which he now gives up his soul :—

She did but look upon him, and his blood
Blushed deeper even from his inmost heart.
She spake,
And his love-wildered and idolatrous soul
Clung to the æry music of her words,
Like bird on bough high swaying in the wind.
He looked upon her beauty and forgot,
As in a sense of drowning, all things else ;
And right and wrong seemed one, seemed nothing ; she
Was beauty, and that beauty everything.
He looked upon her as the sun on earth,
Until, like him, he gazed himself away
From heaven so doing.

Then comes the descent into hell with Lucifer—

For all life's sinful follies run to hell.

And there he falls in love with Elissa, the betrothed of Lucifer. She symbolises Error :—

For when Love
Merges in creature-worship let us mind,
We know not what it is we love : perhaps
It is incarnate evil.

Lucifer leaves her in the charge of Festus, who falls under the strongest temptation—*he loves what is forbidden*, and reasons away his scruples thus :—

What ? What is wrong ?
Shall my love never bound 'neath beauty's touch,
Heart throb, nor eye thaw with hers, when her tears
Drop quick and bright upon her glowing brow
Plunged in her bosom ; because, forsooth, 'tis wrong ?
Let it be wrong ! it is wrong, it is wretchedness
That I would lose both sense and soul to suffer !

The might and truth of heart is never shown
But in loving those whom we ought not to love.

Under the influence of this wild passion he is willing to renounce life, soul, immortality for her love, and exclaims :—

Thou knowest I love thee,
Worship thee : oh ! it's a world more than worship,
The cold obedience which we give to God.
Since I have known thee I have done naught else.
All hours not spent with thee are blanks twixt stars.
I love thee ! love thee ! love thee ! madly love thee !
Oh ! thou hast drunk my heart dry of all love !
It will be empty to aught after thee.
Lady ! how long am I to love thee thus ?
Never did angel love its heaven, nor king
Crown, as I thee.

During this scene Lucifer enters unperceived, and upbraids Festus and Elissa. They part, and in the next Elissa dies, killed by the power and at the word of Lucifer, showing ' how evil works its victim's death ; ' and Festus finds that sinning cannot sate the soul. He has drained Life of all Love, the universe of all Knowledge, and found that all was madness and perdition. The soul writhed amongst such joys, only

Like to a half-crushed reptile on a rose.

He looks back now from the mid zone of life upon the paradise he has lost, and finally turns with a repentant, humbled heart to God. Lucifer vanishes as Festus prays, and Clara, the pure spirit of Truth, comes to him once more. He repents at her feet, and asks :—

Canst thou forgive ? reconsecrate the heart,
Rededicate the temple ?

Confesses that he had worshipped idols and foreswore his early faith to her but—

The love with which the spiritual starts,
Weak'ning, and dark'ning, strained through gloom and gleam,
Sets oft enough in sense, but never ends.
And mortal knowledge, which is error, dies,
And spiritual truth alone outlasts
All nature.

Power is the last temptation offered by Lucifer, and the scene opens with Festus throned, at a gathering of kings and people, to whom he preaches much in the style of the latter-day pamphlets, telling them

All unobstructed power is sanctified ;
Divine rule is a tyranny of good ;
Mine shall be like it. Tyrant ! Well, I am,
What is above this soul of mine but heaven ?

And Democracy he strikes down in true *Carlylese* :

What if a million molehills were to league
Their meannesses together with due pomp,
And to some mountain say, ' In the name of God,
Whither dost thou aspire ? ' Does any deem
That great imperial creature would descend
From those sublimest solitudes of heaven,
Where it had dwelt in snowy sanctity
For ages, ere the mud-made world below
Was more than half conceived, to parley there
At its own footstool, and lay down its crown
And elemental commune with the skies
Because its height was so intolerable,
An its supremacy termed tyranny ?

But neither kings nor the unkinged crowd are content with this tyranny, even though it be of the noblest ; and the rule of Festus ends somewhat abruptly in the general destruction of his subjects, the last scene figuring forth the rule of *mind* which is to precede the final judgment of the world.

Clara clings to Festus to the last, for—

Love, pure love,
Is the last of mortal things that nestles in the heart.

Then dies ; for all things lovely and divine go back to God.
And Festus, having now sounded all the depths of

Feeling, passion, pleasure, woe,
The mysteries and dread delights of spirits,

longs to try the world-life of the future. He feels that he is dying, and reviews his past life with all its sins, which yet he feels will not debar him eternally from the presence of God, nor condemn him to an eternity of pain.

This divinest truth God has inspired ;
Mercy to man is justice to Himself.
He his hand opened, and the world was born ;
He shuts it, and the essential nothingness
Embodied dies its everlasting death.
Open thine arms, O Death ! thou fine of woe
And warranty of bliss !
The spirit's infinite purity consumes
The sullied soul. Eternal Destiny
Opens its bright abyss, and I am God's !

Thus dies Festus : type of our suffering, sinning, redeemed, immortal race.

The poem closes with a scene in the millennial earth, where all creation meet saved and sanctified. Lucifer, having fulfilled his allotted destiny, is again received to heaven, and purity and bliss. Evil is vanquished for eternity by Almighty God, and hell dashed from creation ; and the poem concludes with a prophecy in which is contained the central dogma of

the entire work : that God and heaven will finally reign over and conquer Sin and hell.

Time there hath been when only God was all,
And it shall be again. The hour is named
When seraph, cherub, angel, saint, man, fiend,
Made pure, and unbelievably uplift
Above their present state—drawn up to God,
Like dews into the air—shall be all heaven,
And all souls shall be in God, and shall be God,
And nothing but God be.

Thus musically ends this lofty drama of life. All dissonance is destroyed, for the full melody is completed, of which half the chord only had been struck on earth.

'Festus' is, indeed, a great and singular production. No poem in the language contains such a mass of grand images, of profound thoughts, sublime strains of feeling, golden apophthegms, rich veins of deep reflection, and lofty aspirations after all the kingly ends of life. It is almost *over*-freighted with thought, for the intellect is detained so much on single passages that the mind cannot without effort grasp the entire idea of the work in its unity. As a dramatic poem it wants some fixed point of interest, more vivid personality. The personages are abstractions, not living forms in which a thought is embodied. It is, in fact, less a drama than one long monologue of the author's soul, rolling its mighty stream of thought from first to last through all moral and emotional phases of our common nature. Still no grander soul has ever uttered soliloquy.

II. 'THE ANGEL WORLD.'

DURING the ten years that elapsed between the writing of 'Festus' and 'The Angel World,' no change, apparently, passed over the author's soul ; the gospel his genius was given him to utter, all the glowing passions, lofty thoughts, and infinite aspirations of heart, brain and soul ; his whole life,

with its worlds of sense, feeling and intellect, seem incarnated in that wonderful poem of his youth. Nothing further of mystery and beauty was left for the development of future years. All the God came rushing on him at once ; and, though the divine frenzy has not passed away, yet no additional access of inspiration has come during those ten years of life, when passion, thought, energy, youthful enthusiasm, with its trust and hope, which is almost genius ; all the feelings, faculties, and emotions of our dual nature, half earth, half heaven, reach their culminating-point ; the bright decade of life's highest capabilities, efforts, and enjoyment ; for all before is hope—all after is memory ; the Olympic course which youth traverses as an athlete, and quits crowned and conqueror if ever wreath is destined for the brow. The poet of 'Festus,' however, has already been proclaimed victor, and still bears the olive crown without a rival ; but he has not added another circlet of fame during the two Olympiads that have passed since his first coronation.

The philosophy of 'The Angel World' is identical with that of 'Festus.' It teaches the subordination of all evil to good and the final salvation of the human race ; but the subject, being treated allegorically, fails to excite the same vivid human interest. All allegories are dull and troublesome. The mind becomes wearied with the efforts to follow both the visible and the cryptic meaning, and refuses to resign itself wholly to the influence of either. Each page is a series of enigmas, which exercise the intellect but rarely arouse any sympathetic feelings—a fatal defect in poetry ; and emotion, even of the faintest kind, is scarcely possible when the personalities by which abstract faculties are symbolised belong not to our own human nature, but to a phantom-realm of the author's imagination, as in this poem of 'The Angel World.' 'Festus' plunged us into the vivid, burning realities of human passion, suffering, and aspiration. Our own nature stood before us in that grand work of genius in its fullest reality and profoundest meaning. The earthly, the spiritual, and the mystic, were combined in it. Yet it was not a symbolical but a natural

history of the human soul ; for this triad exists in all life. The beautiful feminine forms by which are figured forth the abstract ideas of truth and error ; the passionate earthly love in which the soul seeks vainly to quench its aspirations for union with the divine which is the archetype of all human love ; the gloomy rebel spirit of Doubt and Mistrust, at once within man and beside him, are all shadows of the *Actual* ; for every object of human affection may be, and is in reality to us, angel or devil, according to the influence they exercise over our minds. Some guiding us up to the very Throne of God ; others darkening the soul, and leading it, a blind chained captive, down through the mire of Sensism to the very lowest level of mere animal existence. Everything in 'Festus' has a literal as well as a mystical significance. But in 'The Angel World' all is allegory. Nothing is capable of literal application. No human emotion is excited, and indeed, from the very nature of the allegory, all human emotion is inadmissible. Mystical metaphors, which may be apprehended by the soul, become debased if translated into ordinary language ; such a metaphor is that which represents humanity as the Bride of Christ. And the ineffable mystery of this union of the mortal and the God forms the theme of the poem. Still the grandeur of the poet's ideas has a singular fascination, and diffuses an almost sanctifying influence over the soul. This inspired guide, with the St. John-like love, which alone brings a soul into full communion with the spiritual, leads us up into high, pure regions of thought, where the whole universe lies before our eyes as one mighty hieroglyph of the divine mind, and through all symbols we discern some mystery of the fathomless abyss of human nature ; while he himself, standing within life, yet apart from it, seems a poet-apostle, missioned, sent forth to teach and preach the eternal relation between the divine and the human, and the ultimate glorious destiny of crowned, immortal humanity.

Reason and Faith are represented in the poem as two angel sisters of whom the elder—Reason or Human Nature, is betrothed to an angel ; but, tempted by evil influences, she

disdains his alliance, and finally banishes him from the orb where she reigns empress. The younger sister meanwhile remains faithful, and accompanies him to a distant world, where they both watch and wait until sin has worked repentance and suffering purification in the heart of the false queen. At length ruin, woe and darkness fall on the orb which she governs, and she herself is dungeoned, and almost bereft of life by the tempter-spirits for whom she first renounced her angel-lover. Repentance comes at last through suffering, and, at the prayer of her holy and unfallen sister, her betrothed bridegroom frees her from thrall, and leads her up humbled, pardoned, saved, and sanctified to heaven, where they are united for eternity. Purified humanity has become the bride of Christ, and the allegory of the soul's history closes.

The story is told in the form of a narration. The angel-lover, on his way to the highest heaven to seek the pardon of his affianced bride, pauses to rest in one of the pure and happy worlds, 'which claim identity with heaven,' and there relates the fall of the orbs which he had himself created, and the doom of the rebel queen to the bright angels who encircle him.

The world in its paradisiacal state, or, what is the same, humanity in its primal innocence—for the world in its beauty or degradation is still but the symbol or shadow of the soul—is thus described :—

This orb myself had framed,
Myself with life endowed, and loving things,
All life is sacred in its kind to heaven,
And all things holy, beautiful and good,
There angels dwelt as in the bosom of bliss :
Peace, piety, and innocence and joy
Made up the square of being. Worship was
The very air they live in. Righteousness
The ground they trod and builded on.

The younger sister reigns over the orb for a series of ages under the guidance of wisdom, when suddenly bands of foreign angels invade the realm, beautiful, seductive, and—

with a shining grace
Which like a lodestar chained, unfelt, the eye;
And made their loveliness exceeding far
The holy beauty of the original tribes.

These—

First tuned their lyres
To angel-love alone; but, half divine,
First taught to separate self from Deity.

When questioned of their origin they replied—

They were the youngest offspring of the heavens,
Children of bliss and knowledge, richly dowered
With singular joys and rare immunities;
That they were spirits of freedom, and their suit
And servage voluntary; that all good
Sprang from the natural impulse of their souls,
And the proud pleasure of pure liberty;
That they the measure of the skies fulfilled,
The complement of all extremes of light;
Of all celestial essence they the sum,
And after them was nothing; which to preach
Of their own selves was their sole business there,
Wandering where'er to wander pleased them best.

This invasion of the domain of Faith and Reason has soon the most fatal effects. Wisdom is wiled away from inculcating her holy lessons, which the tempters assert can only narrow and mar the free action of the soul in the angelic sisters. Faith is dethroned, and Reason is hailed queen by the tumultuous crowd as alone worthy to reign over them.

Her angel-lover—Divine Truth—in vain strives to make his warnings heard. He is driven forth with curses, taunts, and jibes, and, as he passes manacled the crowned traitress on her throne, exclaims :—

‘Behold me thus: I quit thee; ’tis thy will.
Me thou forswearst, who had loved thee more
Than all the tribes of angels, love thee still,
Despite the flatteries wherewith now thy soul

Is darkened and degraded—

Watch, for I come again.'

She answered with a smile, but trembled whilst ;

And he departed that unhallowed hall.

A change now comes over that pure, serene orb. Mirth and revelry resound day and night ; no one recked of ' natural order, dues divine,' and the meek younger sister dwells like a menial at the gates of her haughty empress-sister, who in her proud, self-reliant spirit has banished Faith, Truth, and Wisdom.

The darkness of the soul under this rule of human reason separated from the divine is imaged by a striking analogy :—

No lack was there

Of direful sign and portent ; chief was this—

Each day grew murkier, for the light of truth

Suns those serenest firmaments ; and all

The falsehoods each one uttered, lie by lie,

Rolled into rings of darkness round their heads,

Till the conglomerate gloom obscured the day.

And still

With gathering shades the stranger spirits grew

Still lovelier, *and, like light outletting flowers,*

Glowed in the lengthening eve.

Tempted by the fascinations of beauty and pleasure, Conscience, the oldest counsellor of reason, strays a willing captive into the soft luxurious bowers, where they lay—

Reclined on fragrant flowers, as though

Dreaming, yet only half-dissolved in sleep ;

The radiant chaplet drooping, and the zone

Cœrulean, featly tricked, with sunblent stars,

Unloosened for repose.

There Conscience is lulled to sleep, and the god of the tempting spirits, or *Error*, in the form of a hideous monster, appears demanding the sacrifice of Faith. For sin becomes visible in all its deformity, reigning as a despot in the soul as

soon as Conscience has been silenced ; and requires the complete and utter sacrifice of Faith, or the principle within that still clings to the divine. So the allegory continues, symbolising all the acts and phases of the spiritual nature by these forms of the imagination, sometimes with startling vividness and power, at others with a fatiguing and unnecessary obscurity—a somewhat too Sphinxian love of riddles. The merit of the poem arises, indeed, far less from the general structure than from the extreme beauty of many of the isolated passages ; such, for instance, as the description of the Angel of Truth, when he descends to combat Error and break the bonds of Faith. But, after the victory, the wrath of the sinning spirits falls on him because he had slain their god :—

High upwards rose, then in heaven's dark'ning face
Wide waverings with innumerable tongues,
Like to the desert sand-cloud or simoom,
The columned execrations of the crowd.

And they cast the angel-youth down upon the dead body of the beast, which for three days and nights consumes away with fire, by which the mystery of the death of Christ, and his descent into hell is shadowed. He afterwards quits the sinful orb with the younger sister, whom he had rescued ; and the state of the world when Truth and Faith have departed is drawn with a few gloomy but powerful touches :—

Meanwhile, in that wretched orb
Prevailed continuous night, and all things died
That drew their life from light ; the flowers their life
Breathed out in incense, and the trees laid down
Their leafy crowns forlorn ; the herbed earth
In withered, barren, senseless nakedness
Lay like a clay-cold corpse.

The rebel queen, proud, imperious Reason, is now laughed to scorn, deposed and dungeoned, chained as mad by the all-powerful and usurping Senses.

But the Divine is born
Ever of bitterness, and well I ween

Where sacrifice is not is never fire.
There lay the stricken despot humbled down
Into a penitent angel, sad and meek.

Punishment is the doom of sin, but its aim is purification;
the burning fire of God's wrath descends on the guilty orb :—

From pole to pole it blazed : from sea to sea,
Round the horizon, one unbroken ring
Of round beleaguering fire, which swift as thought
The nations all into one death-doomed flock
Relentless hunted.

But on the wreck and ruins of the burning world a sun-
bright cross descends—

'Neath whose redemptive light,
And restorative radiance all the seeds
Of life leapt upwards in the face of heaven.

The prisoned queen, saved, restored, and purified by suffering,
is clothed in the shiny bridal robes by her meek young
sister, with whom she awaits the coming of her angel-lover.
The regenerated world soars up again to heaven in all its
primal bliss and beauty, and the angels looking down into it,
behold the two sisters, Faith and Reason—

Pale, perfect, and serene, between whom passed
A smile of mutual sympathy and trust,
As though their lot were linked. At last
One to the other spake : ' Sweet sister, mine,
Sleep thou, and let me wait his coming sole ;
Me he expects to watch, but would not thee.'
Thereon that lovely lady laid her down
Below a rock, whereby in woods embowered
And scented all with flowers, the rivers flowed—
Her last words, ' Watch ; in sooth, he will not come
Or not to me, who brought him so great fall.'

And the sun set ; still watched the maiden meek,
And at midnight she prayed——

While she was thus praying, the angel-god 'upon whose

breast the sun blazed, stood between them, and the lady rose all pale.'

Then one by either hand, he led them up—
This, with the holy presence and august,
Most like the mother goddess, city crowned,
Now tiar'd as with the towers of Paradise ;
That, with the lucid crescent on her brow—
To the high seats of old prepared for both.

Then is fulfilled the vision of the Apocalypse. Humanity is seen throned in heaven—symbolised in that mystic book by the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars ; and the poem terminates by the completion of the ineffable mystery of the union of the mortal with the eternal.

The primal truth in the poet's philosophy—that on which he founds the doctrine of the final salvation of the human race—is the identity of all spirit with God's spirit, and its progressive absorption into the divine essence, 'for ever nearing, never near to God.' All life, he holds, proceeds from Him, and all will return to Him. Breath of His breath, it can in no wise fall permanently under the power of evil. In one of his minor poems, entitled 'Prayer,' there is a fine passage on this subject. Comparing the transitory existence of suns and systems with that of the eternal human souls, he says :—

'Man the while

*Restored into the essence whence he came,
One with the great ones who have dwelt in him,
Who cannot deal with less than infinities,
Nor utter what is not divine and true—
Shall ripen in thy bosom till he grows
Through endless heavens triumphant and serene,
Into the thronèd God thou bad'st him be.'*

Revelation teaches that even here God dwells in humanity, as in a living temple. Yet each soul has a distinctive existence, though, being a portion of the divine essence, it is ever aspiring to blend again with the infinite. We are prisoned angels ; gods, shrouded in clay ; Man, Angel, Deity, in one mysterious

combination ; and the highest aim of all noble life is the perfect manifestation of this mystic triad. As the whole universe is an illuminated missal, on which we read the name of God, so all the sublime creations of human genius, the lofty deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice, are true theophanisms—manifestations of God in beauty, harmony, love, or holiness.

It is amidst these high and elevating thoughts the author of 'Festus' loves to dwell. No writer of the age has trod the inner and the supersensual world with so firm a step or so clear a spiritual vision. Like the mystic theosophists of earlier ages, his spirit seems wholly sublimated from earth and concentrated upon the one lofty object—how best to penetrate and reveal the mystery of life. But thoughts like his must be apprehended by sympathetic minds, rather than stated with the precision of theological dogmas. Faith, love and purity are necessary for the heart that would enter, like his, into full and true communion with the divine spirit of the universe. Like the prophet-child of old, he can hear the voice of God in the Temple, while it is inaudible to less pure and holy ministrants at the altar. We must bring our souls into the same spiritual relation with the divine which he has done before we can fully comprehend the thoughts he utters. Most spirits amongst us are bound down, chained, and fettered by a thousand cords to earth—to the mere actual and visible that appeals to the senses ; but the poet dwells freely in the centre of all thought, like the angel standing in the sun ; and from this lofty height can trace the links of the infinite chain connecting all life with Deity, as circling systems revolve round their primary, and the relation of all laws, physical and moral, their mutual symbols and illimitable correspondences, where souls dwelling on lower levels see only isolated facts, 'in disconnection, dead, and spiritless.'

All great minds tend to synthesis, because their range of vision is wider. They rise from the contemplation of the endless diversity of phenomena to the fundamental unity in which all laws meet, whether of mind or matter. And as we ascend in physical or psychological science, the notion of an eternal

principle or force, not under the control of the divine will, or distinct from it, vanishes away. There is no place for the notion of an independent antagonism to God in any enlarged theory of physics or morals. Everywhere, indeed, in the material as well as in the spiritual world, we see two forces acting in opposite directions. Antagonism and dualism seem the law by which all results are produced ; but they are God's right hand and left. The planet is retained in its beautiful ellipse by the opposing action of two influences—the tangential and the gravitating. Were one or other removed, it would either fall into the centre of the sun or rush onwards eternally through space ; but by the attraction of opposites it moves in a definite path, and its progress is the result of a series of falls, or alternate deflections, in the direction of one or the other force. So, by good and evil, is the soul kept in its distinct orbit round the eternal centre of all soul. Like the path of the planet, its progress may be but a succession of falls and restorations ; still, the eternal attraction towards its divine original is never overbalanced. And as no planet escapes from the laws of its primary, and passes forth to wander, in solation and darkness, through the lone infinite of space, so no soul can ever break the silver chord of spiritual gravitation by which it is forced to circle eternally around the divine. The laws of life are best read in the laws of the universe ; but the connection of the physical and mental sciences has yet to be written. Poets feel the analogies, and utter them in the mystic language of symbol and metaphor ; philosophy has yet to state them logically to the understanding as facts. Powerfully and beautifully, Mr. Bailey reveals these infinite mysteries, and arouses the soul to their contemplation. How his sublime genius, glowing with love and spiritualism, contrasts with the chill, cold Deism of almost all the literature of the present day ! The truest criticism on a work of art is its effect on the mind, and no soul can give itself up to his guidance without rising into devotion. One feels as if standing in sunlight on a mountain, while beneath roll the mists of earth ! All that lifts thought above sense sublimates, purifies and exalts the

feelings, exercises a religious influence ; for religion may be manifested in silent worship, aspiration, elevation of soul above self and the senses ; and no artist can be ranked amongst the true kings of soul whose works fail in producing these ennobling, spiritualising emotions. Were all genius directed to the same lofty ends as those which have absorbed the life of the poet whose works we have been studying, the pure, elevated, heaven-attracted spirits amongst us would not aspire after death, as they do now, as the portal by which they may pass forth to a nobler life ; for all life would be noble—would be heavenly ; and humanity, lifted by its poets, prophets, guides, and teachers, would then reach those serene heights of holiness and purity where, in the poet's own sublime words,

Life would be one great ritual, and God's laws
Writ in the vital rubric of the blood.

ALFRED TENNYSON

I. 'THE PRINCESS'

Music that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass

It would be impossible to find a more accurate description of the peculiar sweetness and beauty of Tennyson's verses than the above quotation from one of his own poems. He plays divinely on the chords of the heart, but his genius is not formed to excite, or madden it into action or heroism. He never rages Liszt-like, as the spirit of the storm over the vital keys of feeling, but rather dwells with full indescribable tenderness, sentiment, and expression on some plaintive minor notes that make the tears well up softly and slowly within the eyes—music you could die to, but which would never nerve the soul for the combat of life. One would say of Tennyson that he must have a calm, steadfast nature, never shattered by storms of past passion ; not earthquake-riven ; no shreds of his life have been left hanging on the sharp thorns of past experience. He seems to dream through existence, rocked by zephyrs and the soft motions of undulating flowers, watched by visionary angels ; a man whose soul spreads out like a still lake, broadly and beautifully, to the sun, but wherein are no deep caves, no caverns fathoms down for the wrecked gold and fragments of a shipwrecked past. Or, if the still waters do rise, it is into artificial cascades, sending back the commonest sunbeam changed into a glittering scarf of Orient-tinted jewels, and falling again graceful and beautiful as the

folding wings of an angel. There is no agony in his sufferings. His melancholy exhales itself in an ecstasy of sadness like the spiritual murmurings of a dying Weber. His calm is not conquest, but the languor of emotion when the soul furls its wings on earth, nestled in the bosom of love, and looks shudderingly at the lone infinite beyond—its true home, but whither it never seeks to soar. There is no strong Handelian chorus in his pages to vibrate through the eternal chords of Being, and send thought onward and upward until the sense of the timeless rushes overpoweringly on the soul, and men feel their divinity. No voice in his 'Voices' says to the earth-bound spirit, 'Arise, let us go hence!' In fine, there are no 'intimations of Immortality' in Tennyson's half-pagan graceful Grecian worship of τὸ καλόν. Wordsworth charms human souls from Hades and the Underworld up to the clear, bright, pure æther of heaven with his Orphic song; while Tennyson chains them down with bands of linked roses in an Armida garden, where the winds are formed of the odours of flowers and vibrations of silver laughter, and sweet voices singing of 'love in loneliness' to their lute-strings. For Tennyson does not even draw life boldly and distinctly. His pictures want breadth and colouring; his forms want substance. They are neither divine nor earthly, but shadowy, dreamlike, unsubstantial, mist-wraiths between us and heaven. He sings within the gates of Paradise, and his women have not yet known the taint, the mystery, and the strife that shadow existence since the fall. These 'rare pale Margarets,' 'shadowy, dreaming Adelines,' are people one never meets. You seek humanity and find phantoms; but exquisite phantoms, made up of moonbeams and snowdrift.

With all his beautiful epithets and sunny words, he has given no historical personality to any one of his creations. Is he capable of breathing a living soul into a Juliet, a Rebecca, a Gulnare, a Mignon? Or even comparing him with Keats, whose spirit his resembles, and whose lavish gorgeousness of phrase he almost equals, could he rival or has he rivalled the life-like pictures of Madeline or the Lamia?

This absence of vitality in his creations may be the reason why Tennyson has not founded a school of thought, profound or melancholy, daring or sublime, as Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley have done ; but he has founded a school of Diction. All the younger poets of the day kneel to him as their *gran maestro*. Felicitous phrase and the varied music of metre and rhythm are attainable even by artists of mediocrity, and the age is growing rather too well contented with these sensuous melodies addressed only to the auditory nerve. There is a psychological beauty, however, in Tennyson's verse which no imitator has ever reached ; a charm distinct from the material melody. It is the metaphysical power peculiar to his genius, by which he analyses our own hearts for us—'unties our folded thoughts, until they dangle loose as a bride's hair'—reveals feelings and sensibilities that lay dark, formless, and indistinct, until his words flashed up an inner light that makes them start into vivid beauty, as the forms on an alabaster vase when illuminated from within. Keats was a more consummate painter ; his *Madeline* is a gorgeous Titian ; his *Lamia* a passionate Correggio ; and Shelley's genius was still more harmonically related to nature ; each faintest, fleeting, exquisite cloud-tint was mirrored in his soul ; and to his ear the faintest sphere music is audible, even that within the lily bell—

Music so delicate, soft, and intense,
That it seems like an odour within the sense.

But Tennyson can at times be more gently, lovingly human. We need not soar to meet him. He descends and walks with us in the guise of everyday humanity, as Apollo with the shepherds of Admetus. This removes him as far as possible from all comparison with Shakespeare. Shakespeare's characters are not natural, but they are possible. In that lies their grandeur. He creates wondrous types of humanity in words, as the Greek artists in marble, which might be, but have never yet been realised. He neither reveals himself in his works nor reveals us who read. No author leads to so little introspection—he lifts the soul rather completely up out

of personality and individual consciousness, to a sphere where the beings seem made for the orbit of Jupiter, not of Earth. Radiating from the centre commonplace of everyday humanity, his genius sprang in every direction to the limits of the periphery that bound the utmost possible of humanity ; whereas Tennyson dwells amid the masses whose souls circulate in the ordinary orbit, or if he passes that, it is not in the Shakespearean track, still along the vital radii of life to the circling limit where they touch infinity, but up into a cloud-roofed azure concave, where we meet, not forms of more powerful and mightier organisation than our own, but merely an atmospheric mirage of what we left on earth. Yet, though his characters have no vitality, he himself talks to us through them in the sweet simple language of familiar life, as the living priest within the statue of the lifeless simulated god. Tennyson has much in common with that glorious race of men who rank just below Shakespeare in our literature—there are passages in Beaumont and Fletcher that seem written by him ; and much in Tennyson's moods and modes of thought perpetually suggest their exquisite melody of verse and pervading sentiment, coming directly to our hearts 'like the voice of one beloved singing to us alone,' but likewise their deficiency in strong, bold, vivid, creative power. It is, however, ungenerous, and almost ignoble to criticise a great poet ; for, after all, the understanding can only define faults ; the beauty felt by the soul for ever eludes our words. Rather let us bless God for him as he is ; for a poet is a heaven's gift to a generation. How like breathing free pure mountain air is a half-hour in their atmosphere ! We love, weep, tremble for the once, without one throb of selfishness marring the sacred, holy, and spiritualising influence of emotion upon our nature ; forgetting our sadnesses and woes, our envies and ambitions, we are noble, tender, generous, heroic, according as the poet-mesmeriser lays his finger on our brain ; and we rise by magnetic sympathy to the level of his creations, and yet more, to the level of himself ; he shrouds us in his own divinity, and earth for a while is hidden and forgotten. Even when we

return to the sordid and selfish world, the light still rests upon the countenance that has gazed face to face upon the poet. Alas, that it should so soon vanish ! Still, if he can divinise clay even for a moment, the poet has not lived in vain. Why, then, should the critics come and crush the beautiful winged Psyche in their wooden hands, impale it, not on pins but pens—to number the many eyes with which it looks out on infinity—the spots on its wings—and anatomise and microscopise, and tear it in pieces to ascertain why it pleased us ? Is it not enough that we are pleased ? The most exquisite things in nature please we know not why. Sunset, a still lake, the roaring rush of ocean on the rocks, the mist rolling up a mountain, the golden and green light glancing through the undulating leaves of a forest—flowers, odours, music, motion graceful as a feathery acacia or terrible as a tempest—all in which there is Beauty, Beauty alone, without the Utility that at once connects an object with earth, pleases with the impossibility of defining wherefore. They speak to the soul, and the soul comprehends their language, though material organs cannot express the subtle spiritual ideas they awaken. It is a silent emotion of which the upraised eye, the parted lips, and cheek pale with the presence of the spiritual, are the only interpreters.

Tennyson has much of this indefinable beauty which no criticism can reach, and by which we know that he is a true poet-priest, one who has entered within the veil, and stands beneath the shadow of the cherubim, although his trailing sacerdotal robes may have gathered somewhat of earth as he passed along the outer courts, before treading the golden floor that leads up into the Sanctuary.

The poem of 'The Princess' especially has a profounder meaning, deeper feeling in place of sentiment, and the characters are drawn with firmer, bolder outline. His figures altogether cast more shadow. They are more lifelike and less vague, both in personality and spiritual nature, and there is a superb woman for a heroine—heroic and beautiful ; like that Venus of Egypt sculptured standing upon a lion.

It is one of those poems we should say a grace before reading, as Lamb suggested, in due acknowledgment of its merits. Full of rich spontaneous music, as if the thoughts grouped themselves harmonically of their own accord, like sand upon a glass at the vibration of melody ; mingled with elaborate artificial dissonances—for there is no poet of the age who more earnestly and devoutly studies the perfection of his work as an artist than Tennyson. The very grace and freedom of his versification, so often appearing like facile improvisation, is the result of the profoundest elaboration of all the mysteries of form and sound. How often do some rippling words break up a sweet cadence, else too uniform, or a storm of rough consonants disturb the lulling flow of gentle vocables, like summer hail falling upon flowers in the stillness of a sultry noon ! His fine musical skill always sets ideas to the fittest words—of this instances occur in every page. Describing a toy railway, he says :—

A dozen angry models jetted steam.

Here the words are a succession of gasps ; while the slow sailing motion of the balloon is perfectly expressed in the sustained utterance of these two lines :

A fire balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves,
And dropt a faery parachute and past.

Venus is more than described, she is seen here :

When she came

From barren deeps to conquer all with love,
And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island sides
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they decked her out
For worship without end.

Tennyson is more a musician than a painter. He represents ideas by sounds rather than images. A quick suggestive faculty—a vivid perception of analogies is one of the

most distinguishing marks of genius. Browne, indeed, in his 'Philosophy of the Mind,' asserts that it constitutes genius in itself. Tennyson, however, does not possess the faculty in the same exuberant fulness as Keats and Shelley, though sometimes one meets with a specimen of picture-writing from his hand worthy of a true hierophant of the temple of genius. For instance :—

A babe,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass.

A lady's writing :—

In such a hand, as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East.

A voice that like a bell,
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin.

Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone, like a jewel set
In the dark crag.

He started to his feet—
Tore the king's letter—*snowed it down.*

The tear
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom.

Lovers' meeting eyes are—

Star sisters answering under crescent brows.

The melody produced by alliteration seems also to have great charms for Tennyson's ear, for no writer employs the 'artful aid' so frequently :—

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl graduates in their golden hair.

The summer of the vine in all his veins,

The reiteration here also makes the idea more impressive :—

The crane, I said, may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I,
An eagle clang, an eagle to the sphere.

But there is scarcely a line in which some artistical word artifice is not employed.

The first intention of the poem of 'The Princess' seems to have been a playful satire, sharp and fine as fairy lances—a feathered shaft aimed at Woman's Progress ; but the poet's soul discerned as he proceeded the truth and beauty that lay at the foundation of the idea symbolised by this much-vilified phrase, and the result was a solemn, beautiful and philosophic ending in which some very noble teaching concerning the rights of female souls has been evolved, and the efforts justified of those who would

Lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.

There is no probability in the tale. It is a fantasia, an 'enchanted reverie,' and openly declared as such, as if the poet was afraid the world would think him turning dogmatic, and philosophic, and prosy, and consequently one of the progress school.

The 'silken-saddled' Lilia calls on him to relate a tale to pass away a summer's day. 'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' exclaims her brother, and 'make her some great princess, six feet high, grand, epic, homicidal.'

The little Lilia, it seems, has strong feelings on the subject of woman's emancipation, and maintains that nothing

'But convention keeps them down,
It is but bringing up, no more than that ;
You men have done it : how I hate you all !
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children ! Oh ! I wish

That I were some great princess, I would build
 Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are taught.
 We are twice as quick !' And here she shook aside
 The hand that played the patron with her curls.

Lilia's suggestion is taken for the tale—'a tale of college and of ladies' rights,' with a heroine, terrible and beautiful as Etty's Judith, upon whom all the new light concentrates which the women-apostles of the age have been flashing on the dark barriers of convention. But the poet's theory differs somewhat from Lilia's ; he maintains that men and women are not similar but diverse—that male and female natures are the complement one of the other ; halves of one perfect human nature that existed in Adam before the deep sleep fell on him from whence arose the crowned consort Queen of Creation. But the qualities proper to perfect humanity were not equally divided between them. Man, with more powerful senses, was given a strong judgment and clear reason to keep them in control, so that his life is destined to be agonistical. Woman, too weak even to war against herself, in default of strong judgment was left the angel instincts unclouded by the senses, which guide her right always and unerringly, independent of all reason. All that is beautiful in a woman's nature is *instinctive* : all that is noble in a man's is attained by conquest—therefore, having no strong sensuous nature rising as an opaque medium to cloud the sinless instincts of the soul, woman is—

Truer to the laws within.
 Severer in the logic of a life.
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influence
 Of earth and heaven.
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart, and slips of sensual mire,
 But whole and one.

The superb heroine of the tale, however—the Princess Ida—holds loftier notions of the force, judgment, and reason inherent in her sex.

Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man

So she obtains a summer palace from her father, which, with the aid of two widows, she transforms into a 'University for maidens,' with lectureships and professorial chairs, of course all filled by the fair sex,¹ she herself 'the Head,' and they pass a law making it death for any male thing but to peep at them.

But this princess, 'grand, epic, homicidal,' has a lover betrothed to her from infancy, who, undeterred by her sanguinary code and restrictions not to wed, resolves to seek her within the very walls of her college, and see if love cannot conquer learning in a woman's soul. For this purpose, he and two trusted friends assume woman's attire as the only means of gaining entrance, and visiting her father, old King Gama, *en route*, hear from him how the two widows, Lady Psyche and Lady Blanche, first fed her theories about woman's equal rights. With this he says:—

'Our banquets rang
Nothing but this; my ears were very hot
To hear them. Knowledge—so my daughter held—
Was all in all. They had but been, she thought,
As children: they must lose the child, assume
The woman. Then, sir, awful odes she wrote
About this losing of the child, and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason. These the women sang;
And they that know such things would call them
Masterpieces. They mastered me.'

Nothing daunted, the prince-lover and his friends proceed

¹ The idea, however, is not new; a good many years ago, Johnson writes of Nekayah, the sister of Rasselas: 'The Princess thought that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best; she desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence and patterns of piety.'

to the college, where they are admitted to the presence of 'the Head,' and the Prince thus describes her :—

'There at a board, by tome and paper, sat
 With two tame leopards couched beside her throne,
 All beauty compassed in a female form,
 The Princess. Likier to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the sun,
 Than our man's earth ; such eyes were in her head,
 And so much grace and power breathing down
 From over her arched brows.
 She rose her height, and said, " We give you welcome. "'

After this they take the oaths, and the Princess bids them look round the hall and at the statues—

'Not of those that men desire ;
 Sleek odalisques or oracles of mode,
 Nor stunted squaws of East and West ; but she
 That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she,
 The foundress of the Babylonian rule,
 The Carian Artemisia, strong in war,
 The Rhodope that built the Pyramid.
 Clœlia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
 Of Agrippina.'

'Dwell with these,' she exclaims, 'and lose convention ; since to look on our noble forms makes noble through the sensuous organism that which is higher.'

In the professor's hall they find the Lady Psyche giving a lecture, Lady-Morgan-wise, upon 'Woman and her Master,' to a patient range of pupils—

Who sat along the forms like morning doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch.

She herself—

Erect behind a desk of satin wood,
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
 And on the hither-side or so
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,

In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaia slept.

Florian, one of the Prince's friends, discovers his sister in the Lady Psyche, but the three young men hold their peace and listen to the lecture, in which she took

A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past,
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each
How far from just.

Yet scattered stars had already shown what woman could be.

In arts of government,
Elizabeth and others ; arts of war,
The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace,
Sappho and others vied with any man.

At last 'she rose upon a wind of prophecy.' Woman was to reign joint sovereign with men in council, wealth, science, art, business, and life, throughout all its phases—

Should bear a double growth of those great souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.

After listening in turn to all the lectures—

With scraps of thundrous epic lilted out
By violet-hooded doctors ; elegies,
And jewels five words long
That on the stretched forefingers of all time
Sparkle for ever.

'Why, sirs, they do all this as well as we,'

exclaims the Prince.

'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril, 'very well :
But when did women ever yet invent ?'

After a lecture upon Primary Strata by the Princess, the tent is pitched in the valley, and feast and song aid the hours

to pass. The Prince attempts something sentimental which Ida criticises :—

‘A mere love poem ! O ! for such, my friend,
We hold them slight. They mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And play the gates of hell with paradise,
And paint the slave to gain the tyranny.
So they blaspheme the Muse ! But great is song
Used to great ends. Ourselves have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash’d
The passion of the prophetess.’

She spoke and turn’d her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixed on mine,
The while I dragg’d my brains for such a song.

But before the Prince can speak, Cyril, who had been draining the wine flask rather more frequently than befitted his garb feminine, began

To troll a careless, tavern-catch,
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies.

The secret is soon discovered. ‘Then rose a shriek as of a city sacked.’

The Princess escaping is flung into the river, from which her lover rescues her ; but she is stern still and implacable, and summons them to trial :—

‘They haled us to the Princess, where she sat
High in the hall. Above her droop’d a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a masthead
Prophet of storm. A handmaid on each side
Bow’d towards her, combing out her long black hair,
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women, blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock,

Or like a spire of land that stands apart,
Cleft from the main.

These are the executioners of her decrees. Psyche has escaped, but left her 'lily shining child' behind. And Lady Blanche is Attorney-General. But while the trial proceeds, letters come from old King Gama, stating that his territory has been invested by the Prince's father, who holds him prisoner until his son is safely delivered up; and a second from the angry father himself, running thus:—

'You have our son; touch not a hair of his head;
Render him up unscathed; give him your hand.

Though indeed we hear

You hold the woman is the better man ;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their lords.'

The alarm amongst the maidens at the approach of the hostile army is then exquisitely described. It is a picture of the Venetian school :—

From the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in a storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouthed, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were on the very walls !

——While high above them stood

The placid marble muses looking peace.

The Princess, rising up ‘robed in the dark night of her long hair,’ addresses these timid allies of woman’s rights in a speech of considerable violence, yet blames them not so much for fear. She says :—

'Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you.'

Still, shamed at their weakness, she vows to dismiss them on the morrow, to live with those

Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to sew—
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.

Equally ignominious is the dismissal of the Prince and his friends :—

'I wed with thee' [she exclaims]; 'I bound by pre-contract
Your bride, your bond-slave! Not, though all the gold
That ruins the world were pack'd to make your crown.
Here, push them out at gates.'

Thereupon they are seized by the eight mighty daughters of the Plow, who, 'with grim laughter,' thrust them out at gates. A tourney follows, in which the Prince with fifty knights fights against Ida's brother with fifty more.

Ida, strong-hearted, fit to sit 'upon a king's right hand in thunder storms,' watches the combat from her palace battlements :—

Highest among the statues, statue-like,
Between a cymbaled Miriam and a Jael,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a saint's glory up in heaven.

The Prince and his knights are vanquished, he himself wounded apparently to death. Upon which, 'like the great Dame of Lapideth,' Ida from her palace roof chants a hymn of triumph; then issuing forth with her maidens through the great bronze gates—

The lovely, lordly creature, floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay,
And called them dear deliverers, immortal names,
And said, 'Ye shall not lie in the tents but here,
Nursed by female hands and hospitality.'

A Dantesque picture of the father 'lifting his grim head' from her lover's wounds at last melts her to pity, and a tide

of human feeling for the first time rushes over her soul. She desires all the wounded warriors to be carried to her palace—Psyche regains her star-headed babe and is restored to favour—she sees the *dénouement* approaching with a fatality like a catastrophe—pity unbars the heart, and love enters the defenceless citadel. She feels herself already dragged down from her fixed height, to mix with

The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weaklings even as they.

In vain Lady Blanche remonstrates on breaking the laws and allowing the men to enter—a law she had herself proposed, for she says :—

‘I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And blocked them out.’
The maidens came, they talked,
Hung round the sick, till she, not fair, began
To gather light, and she, that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious acts,
And in their own clear element they moved.

The scene where the Prince awakens to consciousness from his long delirium is exquisitely beautiful. Ida is beside him :—

Palm to palm she sat;
The dew dwelt in her eyes,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench’d it is with tempest, to the sun.

He turns to her, and utters whisperingly :—

‘If you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask for nothing: only if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.

She turn’d; she paus’d;
She stoop’d, and out of languor leap’d a cry;
Leapt fiery passion from the brink of death;
My spirit closed with Ida’s at the lips.’

Like that kiss, *tutto tremante*, of the lovers of Rimini, which still thrills along the centuries through the chords of human hearts :—

‘Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose,
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all
Her falser slipped from her like a robe,
And left her woman ; but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanc’d behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill’d through and through with love in happy sleep.’

In the deep night she comes to watch by him, and reads low-toned to herself a small sweet idyll, while he listens with shut eyes :—

‘Come down, oh maid, from yonder mountain height,
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To set a star upon the sparkling spire,
And come, for love is of the valley, come.’

We see how the woman’s heart is melting—all her cold isolated theories break up and drift away like blocks of ice beneath the power of a genial sun.

‘Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sunk upon her hands,
And her great heart, through all the faultful past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break.’

Ida is almost too repentant here of her proud theories of womanhood. Love, as it always does, is turning her woman’s nature to a slave’s. Still powerful in revolt against all theories of woman’s independence was that instinct of her nature which seems satisfied only with self-sacrifice, self-immolation for the one beloved. Ida is rapidly falling into this utter prostration before the heart conqueror, but her lover saves her dignity by admitting a theory which allows her still to reign as well as to love. Reign equally with the man, but in different spheres. He says :—

‘The woman’s cause is man’s. They rise or sink
Together. Dwarf’d or godlike, bond or free ;

If she be small, slight natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow ? But work no more alone ;
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms.
 That seem to keep her up but drag her down.'

' Let her be

All that not harms distinctive womanhood ;
 For woman is not undeveloped man,
 But diverse. Could we make her as the man
 Sweet love were slain.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow—
 The man be more of woman, she of man,
 He gain in sweetness, and in moral height,
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind,
 Till at the last she set herself to man
 Like perfect music unto noble words.'

Ida having expressed her fear that these things never
 could be accomplished, the Prince continues :—

' Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives ; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal. Each fulfils
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will they grow,
 The two-cell'd heart beating with one full stroke.'

There is nothing in the whole poem more exquisitely tender
 and beautiful than the whole of this passage where woman's
 place in the scheme of humanity is drawn with such sublime
 truth, and at last the grand-souled Ida, 'three times more
 noble than three score of men,' the 'cymbaled Miriam,'
 falls low as the enemies she sang of, drowned in the deep sea
 of love ; but, after all, what woman, genius or not, could resist
 the tender, subduing sentiment, feeling, passion, and melody
 of that last speech in which her lover woos her ? Divine
 thoughts, divinely uttered ! We half forgive Ida that she
 yielded.

II. 'THE HOLY GRAIL' AND OTHER POEMS

THE old Arthurian legends have always had a magic charm for Tennyson, and seem to have haunted him with their mystic shapes of loveliness since first he uttered thought in verse. In his earliest published volume appeared 'Morte d'Arthur,' and also the exquisite dreamy music of 'The Lady of Shalott,' floating down the river to die, with her eyes fixed upon the towers of Camelot.

The later idylls are also rich in those wonderful Tennysonian lines of beauty that send an electric flash quivering through the frame and are remembered for ever. Yet the language is the simplest vernacular, mostly monosyllabic, almost curiously and affectedly so; and on analysing it one feels surprised to find such soft tenderness and sweet music evolved from elements so simple. There are whole passages composed of monosyllables only, as thus :—

—And sad

At times he seemed, and sad with him was I;
Stern, too, at times, and then I loved him not.
But sweet again, and then I loved him well;
And now of late I see him less and less.

Yet, throughout there is a noble grace, a solemn cadence in the music which diffuses a holy calm over the spirit, such as one might feel on entering suddenly from the strong glare of noon into the still silence of a temple of God. There are few illustrations, few similes, and those only of the antique Homeric type, struck from the sympathy of the poet with common life and nature, or with the simple unchanging manifestations of human feeling. There is truly much of the antique mind in Tennyson; especially that innate strong sense of harmony and proportion which makes all he touches flow into graceful forms. Above all things, there is never any straining after violent exaggerated expression in his verses, no mad beautiful raving of the delirious senses, like the Swin-

burne music, so deadly sweet, so intoxicated by passion. These two poets, Swinburne and Tennyson, are indeed the exponents of two eternally opposite natures. How little there is of deep spiritual thought in all the lava floods of fiery images, the ocean waves of purple words that burn and foam through Swinburne's poems, beautiful as they are in their thrilling accentuated rhythm ; while Tennyson can convey in the simplest forms all that is noblest, loftiest, and purest in the soul's highest aspiration. He expends all his power in heightening the glory of the gem, while Swinburne thinks only of the gorgeous splendour of the setting. Especially in his later poems Tennyson seems to disdain and intentionally cast aside all sensuous allurements of word, or phrase, or metaphor. A holy earnestness is over his spirit—a calm dignity as of one who stands on the heights from which he can already see the far-off spiritual land. All self-seeking and self-glorification are lost in these sublime moments, when the divine fire burns on the prophet's lip, and he calls to the souls wandering in the mists of low desire to come up and stand with him on the mount. His whole soul is thrown into the ideal, and it wakes to life vivified with the breath of his power and animate in the beauty of his creations ; while Swinburne radiates round him such intense egotism that, looking down into the mirror of life, he obscures heaven and sees only himself. There is something deeply affecting in the solemn calm, the purity, the sadness, and the spiritual grandeur of the region Tennyson lifts us to ; at least souls of the highest order will feel the wonderful influence of his guiding hand. With the crowd, this volume, in its holy, truthful beauty, may not be popular ; but, at all events, it may defy the stings and arrows of a shallow criticism. Besides, whatever a great poet writes should be accepted reverently, not criticised coldly. Prophets are still with us ; inspiration is still with us. We have more need of faith than of judgment. A most sweet singer, a man of noble genius, has written a poem full of noble thought ; let us keep silence, and submit ourselves trustingly to his guidance while we sit at his feet

and learn wisdom. Has not Tennyson himself denounced 'the blatant magazines' that dare to utter oracles, as if they were the Urim and Thummim, and were the true priests of God. And with what proud scorn he warns the critics—

Vex not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit.
 Vex not thou the poet's mind,
 For *thou canst not fathom it.*

The first idyll opens with a description of the young King Arthur, who is then forming his government and studying how to fulfil its duties. He sees Guinevere, a king's daughter, and loves her, for

She is fairest of all flesh on earth,

and he sends his best-beloved and most trusted knight, Launcelot, to fetch her to his Court, where they are to be wedded ; and here was the origin and beginning of the fatal passion which was the madness and the sin of Launcelot's life. Then we are told how Arthur forms his celebrated Order of Knights, and addresses them 'with large, divine, and comfortable words,' while Wisdom stands beside him. The Lady of the Lake, 'who knows a subtler magic than his own,' clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful—

A mist
 Of incense curled about her, and her face
 Well nigh was hidden in the minster gloom ;
 But there was heard among the holy hymns
 A voice as of the waters—for she dwells
 Down in a deep calm, whatsoever storms
 May shake the world ; and when the surface rolls,
 Hath power to walk the waters like Our Lord.

The character of Arthur is drawn from first to last with the most perfect and noble touches. Even in his love for Guinevere aspiration is still stronger than passion, and he yearns for that love to be returned, that so through it he may

rise into a higher life of intellect and lofty aims. Without her he feels that his life passes 'vext with waste dreams.'

' But were I joined with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And, reigning with one will in everything,
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live.'

The first idyll closes with the wedding of the great king to her 'who was the fairest under heaven,' and the second is devoted to 'The Holy Grail,' which, though it gives the title to the volume, occupies but a small portion of it. The story of the 'Sangreal' is one of the most beautiful of the mediæval legends, full of a deep and mystic symbolism. The old German version describes with wonderful pathetic power how the young hero, Sir Percival, was reared by his mother in a lonely wood, where, with still nature and the voice of birds, he grew up till his soul became filled with a burning desire to do great deeds, and he resolved to go to King Arthur's Court. There he became celebrated above all the other knights for perfect nobleness and purity, and in one of his knightly wanderings he came to the castle of the Priest-King, Titurel of Spain, built by him as a shrine for the Sangreal, or Holy Cup, the same from which Our Lord himself drank at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea afterwards caught some drops of the precious Crucifixion blood. The cup had wonderful properties, and selected its own guardian, who gained it only after long striving towards the attainment of perfect purity.

Sir Percival, filled with holy zeal to become a Templar, or guardian of the Temple of the Grail, renounced all worldly glory and affections, devoting himself to the study of God, salvation, and human destiny, till he reached such a height of spiritual perfection that, for his soul's great victory over evil, he was crowned king of the mystic Grailburg. A profound meaning lies hidden in this ancient legend. The silent, lonely rearing of the young hero symbolised the perfecting of the soul in the sanctity of stillness, apart from all the devastating

passions of life. It was a mystic and a sad metaphor ; for this sublime wine-cup is the cup of suffering, and the question which 'age after age still hears from the lips of Christ : ' Can ye drink of the cup which I drink of ? ' has an infinite depth of sorrow in it, for it means, ' Can ye suffer as I have suffered, yet triumph and conquer through all as I have done ? '

The quest of the Holy Grail is, in truth, the quest of all great souls who pine after perfection. To them, as to the young hero, all men and women are but as phantoms. They no longer live within life but above it ; and through the fires of suffering the dross of earth is burned away, and the soul thrills with but one emotion, that divine aspiration to God of which all earthly love is but the symbol.

In Tennyson's poem the profound significance of the legend is scarcely worked out with sufficient clearness. The meaning is left shadowy and vague. We do not stand as it were face to face with the young hero in his combats with temptation and sin. There is no dramatic action, for when the poem opens we are told that Sir Percival is already dead, and the story of his life is narrated by a monk as he had it from the lips of the dying hero, and who tells, in the words of Sir Percival, how the frenzy seized on him and others to go in quest of the Holy Grail. His nun-sister was the inspirer, with

Her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them beautiful ;
Beyond all knowing of them wonderful ;
Beautiful in the light of holiness.

Of the knights some went forth from vanity, but soon returned from weariness ; and Launcelot to seek a cure for that fatal passion for the queen that consumed him like a fever ; but Galahad, the youngest and most beautiful of King Arthur's knights, went forth with Sir Percival, from the earnest longing they had for the cup of purity and holiness, for Galahad had seen and talked with the holy sister, whose words were inspiration—

And as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes

Through him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed with her belief.

The knights meet in the great hall of Arthur's palace, with its four zones of sculpture, the mystic symbols of the progress of humanity.

And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And in the third, are warriors perfect men,
And in the fourth, are men with growing rings.

They take leave of the king, who has tried in vain to dissuade them from this visionary purpose, and they go forth on the quest. Sir Percival passes through the beauty of earth, and sees the beauty of fair women and the glory of life, and hears the wisdom of the sage ; but as he approaches, and feels his heart touched by them, they crumble into dust, and he is 'left alone, and thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.' Then he finds he lacks one grace—humility—and he sets out a second time on the quest, more strong because less proud, and less confident in his own strength. But Galahad, the gentle, pure, and holy Galahad, sped on untroubled by the phantoms of earth, and every bridge turned to fire as he passed over it, and he enters into the glories of the stars and the thunders that seemed to him like the shouting of the sons of God, and at length reaches the eternal sea, and floats like a luminous cloud within the gate, all of one glorious pearl, and there the veil is rent from his eyes, and he beholds the Holy Grail, 'which never eyes on earth again shall see,' for it is Death that rends the veil ; it is Death that crowns the victim. This whole passage in the poem is full of a resplendent and most spiritual beauty. Faint, weary, and dispirited, the other knights return to Arthur's Court. They had caught glimpses of the Holy Grail at times, but the vision soon passed away, for they failed in earnestness, and passion clouded their eyes, and they even became 'too blind to have desire to see,' and so gave up the quest, some from indifference, others from despair. When all the knights are reassembled, King Arthur questions

them of their adventures, their success, or their failure ; and turning to Launcelot, asks how it was that he, beyond all men, so brave and so noble, could have failed to obtain the mystic cup.

Above all the characters drawn by Tennyson in his Arthurian sketches, this one of Sir Launcelot, the best beloved friend of the king, is painted with the most human and the most pathetic touches. With what intense and tearful power he shows us the loving, erring, sinning, yet proud and loyal-hearted Launcelot, struggling in his heart with the fatal love for the queen which was the madness of his life, and the bitter consciousness of the treachery to his king and friend which made its agony and despair. There is nothing in all human emotion more tragic than the wild intoxication of sinful love surging in the heart along with the terrible self-condemnation of a lofty and noble nature which feels the degradation but cannot lift itself above the sin. The tragic element, too, is heightened by the entire trust with which the king meets his friend ; too noble-minded to be suspicious, too pure to fear treachery, he welcomes back Launcelot to his Court with the free joy and love of unshaken confidence. Launcelot, consumed by love, tortured by remorse, had gone forth filled with wild hope and desire to attain the Holy Grail, and so free his soul from temptation ; but for him, sin-marred and passion-struck, the Grail is not. In vain he tries, he cannot reach it ; so with the doomed sin still on him he returns, and when the king questions him, Launcelot answers :—

A dying fire of madness in his eyes.

‘ Oh, King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,

In me there lived a sin

So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,

Noble and knightly in me twined and clung

Round that one sin, until the wholesome flowers

And poisonous grew together, each as each,

Not to be plucked asunder ; and when thy knights

Sware, I sware with them only in the hope

That could I touch or see the Holy Grail,

They might be plucked asunder.

And forth I went, and while I yearned and strove,
My madness came upon me as of old.
And in my madness to myself I said,
I will embark, and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin.'

Then he describes how he reached a castle built high upon a rock, and through the crevice of the closed door he saw a glorious light streaming, and heard the chant of glory to the Grail, and continues :—

'Then in my madness I essayed the door,
It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a heat,
As from a seven times heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swooned away.
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
The Holy Grail—but what I saw was veiled,
And covered; and the quest, 'twas not for me.'

When Launcelot ends, a silence falls upon the hall, but Arthur comforts him, and will not believe that all honour and pure nobleness is so twined round one sin that true knighthood can be utterly lost. Then he chides his knights for having left human wrongs to right themselves while they went forth on visionary quests, and tells them :—

'Man may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done.'

But with true work will come divine visions of the night and day :—

'In moments when he feels he cannot die.'

With this mingling of the ideal and the actual in Arthur's noble speech the idyll ends, and from it we have glimpses of the deep meaning that underlies this most beautiful poem.

The next idyll, 'Pelleas and Ettarre,' is a tale of love and jealousy; of a light woman's light love contrasted with the loyal passion of a man's strong heart. Ettarre is a vain,

haughty, beautiful woman—a lady of the land—who would have all men slaves to her imperial nature ; a woman born to receive homage but who could never give back love. She flatters and beguiles Pelleas with the glamour of her beauty, in order that he may fight at the tourney for her sake and win the golden circlet for her, which is the prize. But when he places the crown upon her brows in sight of all the world she scorns him, and henceforth bids her minions to drive him from her castle walls, for earnest love wearies a shallow heart. She cared only for conquest ; her triumph was to drive her chariot over crushed lives ; her lovers must be her victims.

But to Pelleas, and to natures like his, love comes but once in life, and never more—subduing, terrible, eternal. His soul lies within her guarded castle gates, and he cannot fly the spot, but waits and hopes, and loves through all the scorn she heaps upon him. But thus his life is lost, his sword lies idle, the world and all the world's work become but shadows to him, and nothing real is left but the passion and the torture. So from noon to midnight he feeds upon the thoughts of her beauty—

For large her violet eyes looked, and her bloom
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless heaven :
And but for those large eyes—the haunts of scorn—
She might have seemed a toy to trifle with.

But while he gazed
The beauty of her flesh abashed the boy,
As if it were the beauty of her soul.

This noble constancy is felt by Ettarre as a reproach to her own levity ; and she has her lover bound and brought to her presence that she may insult him before her court. But he rebukes her with such grave gentleness, telling her :—

‘ I had rather you were worthy of my love,
Than that you loved me ’—

that, at last, a sense of her own false, shallow nature comes over her, and in anger, because feeling her own inferiority

compared to his nobleness, she drives him forth again, murmuring :—

‘ He would not love me if he knew me well.’

Sir Gawain—the light-hearted, light-loving Gawain—happening to ride by, meets Pelleas, and hears his tale. Then Gawain swears by all things, sacred and profane, that he will avenge his friend and bring this haughty woman to reason. So he gains entrance to the castle, meaning honestly to plead for Pelleas ; but to see Ettarre is to fall under her sorcery. Gawain loves her and forgets his friend. Three days Pelleas waits, wandering about the land. On the third day he returns. The castle gates are open—there has been a revel, and all the servitors and the guard and the watch are sleeping. He passes on through the gardens, all silent save for the murmur of the rivulet that spilt itself among the roses. He reaches the pavilions, and behold, in one, Gawain and Ettarre lay asleep, she with the golden circlet on her brow. Pelleas draws his sword to kill them, but hesitates. He cannot slay a sleeping knight—

Then turned, and so returned, and groaning laid
The naked sword athwart their naked throats.
There left it, and them sleeping, and she lay,
The circlet of the tourney round her brow,
And the sword of the tourney across her throat.

Then dashed the rowel into his horse
And bounded forth and vanished through the night.

He no longer loves her, but loathes her ; but she, when she awakes and finds the sword of her lover, struck by a sense of her sin, and recognising for the first time the grandeur and deep love of the heart she had flung away and lost, pines and wastes for sorrow and vain love ; but Pelleas returns no more.

The third and last idyll, ‘The Passing of Arthur,’ has an addition of about a dozen pages to the poem already so well known as the ‘Morte d’Arthur.’ Nothing can surpass the grand and exquisite music of the sublime chant of death. The three dark queens bear away the kingly spirit of the stainless

king to the land of shadows, to abide with the dead heroes of the past, and with this wonderful vision, divinely solemn, closes the most perfect work of an almost perfect poet. Tennyson stands alone on the Peak of Parnassus he has reached and made his own. He is the laureate of deep, pure, holy thought, beyond all the living poets of the age. In many others we find, indeed, the oratory of strong feelings, mighty as ocean floods, but as reckless in their dash and roll ; or the passion waves, burning and devastating, as if upheaved by an earthquake and heated by a volcano. But true poetry dwells above and beyond all these disturbing influences in a serene calm of lofty, spiritual thought. Tennyson has reached this height, on which Wordsworth stood before him, and his poems, like the sculptured gods of the Greek Pantheon, manifest the divine idea in the most perfect and beautiful of material forms.

Of the remaining poems in the volume, two have already appeared in magazines—‘The Victim’ and ‘Lucretius.’ In the latter we have glimpses of Tennyson’s own mind—the aspirations, the questionings, and the sadness of the gifted soul chafing in its fleshly fetters. He seems to speak to us beneath the mask of the old Roman philosopher, who preferred death, it is said, to the bondage of the senses. And this poem has also a mystical meaning, for the female influence which tries to draw down the intellect of the philosopher to its own low level symbolises the eternal conflict between the Understanding and the Reason, to use the phraseology of Coleridge ; between the spirit of the animal that goeth downward, and the spirit of a god which goeth upward, both of which dwell within us, and both of which are ever at war, one against the other.

Lucretius mourns bitterly over the bondage to the senses, these glowing delusive Hetairai that tempt the soul downward and earthward. All great souls feel and have felt the same. Wordsworth has said with deep truth and profound self-knowledge :—

’Tis the most difficult of tasks to keep
Heights which the soul is competent to gain.

And the true tragedy of the soul is the remorse and self-condemnation which is sure to avenge even a momentary enthrallment of the higher to the lower nature. From this conflict, this dissonance, these alternations of aspiration and degradation, and from the miserable doom of disease and 'wretched age' that awaits humanity, Lucretius resolves to free himself by death, that so he might give back to nature the frame and spirit he had received from her, to be dashed again into new forms,

Through all her cycles into man once more.

With this he drove the knife into his side, and the aspiring, immortal spirit passes from the fleshly bondage ; but whither—who can tell ?

'The Golden Supper' is a gracefully written tale from Boccaccio, but contains none of those passages of striking beauty that impress themselves for ever in the memory. Julian, the hero, loves his cousin Camilla, but she weds his rival, Lionel, and Julian buries himself in solitude far from the sight of her. After a year's marriage Camilla dies, and is laid in the family vault with uncovered face, as the usage was. Lionel in deep grief leaves the country immediately after the funeral and goes no one knows whither. But Julian, longing to behold the face of her he loved once more, descends into the vault and reverently kisses her. The kiss thrills her blood to life and she rises from the death-trance that had seemed as death. Then Julian carries her to his mother's house and tends her with saintly purity, watching for Lionel's return. At length, still ignorant of his wife's restoration, Lionel appears, and Julian invites him and all their friends to a banquet, called from its magnificence 'The Golden Supper.' A picture of Camilla is placed at the head of the banquet-hall, but still Julian has not revealed the secret, until at a sign from him Camilla enters, 'crossing her own picture as she came.'

On her head

A diamond circlet, and from under this

A veil, that seemed no more than gilded air

Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze,
 With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers
 Slow moving, as a wave against the wind,
 That flings a mist behind it in the sun—
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated in,
 And slowly pacing to the middle hall.

There paused, and stood ; her breast
 Hard heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.

After this very beautiful and dramatic effect Julian leads her to her husband's arms ; and the story ends with a picture of their complete wedded happiness, while Julian—the noble-hearted Julian—proud of his victory over himself, yet sad with deathless love, bids farewell to all, and passes away into foreign lands, to live or end his life.

The most remarkable of the minor poems is that entitled 'The Higher Pantheism,' full of the faith which springs from spiritual insight, and is the product of the transcendental reason. In the rush and frenetic haste of daily life it is difficult to give up ourselves completely to the train of thought out of which such a poem was generated, to shut out the glare of life, and try to read the hidden writing of God upon the heart. To many, no doubt, it will seem obscure ; but those gifted with the spiritual sense will discern its meaning. A simple poem, called 'Wages,' also reveals something of the poet's creed :—

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,

Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea ;
 Glory of virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong.

Nay, but she aimed not at glory ; no lover of glory she,
 Give her the glory of going on, and still be.

The wages of sin is death, *if the wages of virtue be dust.*

Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm or the fly ;

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,

To rest in a golden grove, or bask in a summer sky :

Give her the glory of going on, and not to die.

It is to be regretted that Tennyson, who is such a master

of all the gamut of sweet sound, should have given us in this volume none of those exquisite and perfect lyrics, like heaven-born music, in which he excels all the poets of the age—lyrics like ‘Tears, idle tears,’ or ‘Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now,’ from the idyll of Queen Guinevere’s repentance, that faultless and beautiful poem, the gem of all modern poetry. But, in place of the divine lyrism in which he has no equal, we have the rough, rugged ballad of ‘The Northern Farmer,’ companion to the worthy gentleman who has been already before the public. The English critics seem amazingly delighted with these northern ballads; but, to one unused to it, considerable time is required to spell out the sound and meaning of the barbarous words, along with all those mysterious dots powdered over the vowels, by which the poet tries to indicate the pronunciation. In Ireland we have nothing analogous to these uncouth English dialects. All Irish peasants who speak English do so with singular grammatical purity and precision, simply because they have acquired the language either from intercourse with the higher classes or at the village schools. An uncouth, savage dialect is the product of centuries of unlettered barbarism; but the Irish only became acquainted with the English language after it had reached an organised perfection through literature. Yet, even then, it must have seemed harsh to the speakers of the soft caressing Celtic tongue; for who can forget the great O’Neill’s response when requested to converse in English with the envoy who had come to treat with him?—‘What! shall an O’Neill writhe his mouth in clattering English?’

It is strange that, in this nineteenth century, when education has made such progress, that not only English peasants, but even wealthy English farmers, should still talk the dialect of savages in place of the literary language of their country. It must be very painful indeed to a sensitive ear to live amongst a people who converse like the northern farmer. A Parliamentary Commission should at once be established to take measures for teaching the English how to speak their own tongue, and we could, if required, send over to them a

dozen or so of Irish schoolmasters fully adequate to the task. There is, however, some humour in the ballad of the 'Northern Farmer' to repay one for the immense trouble of getting through it, and some very sound advice also on the propriety of marrying for money in place of love; for, as the farmer observes, with considerable acuteness, to his son, who is about making a fool of himself in the matter of love—(we translate the verse into ordinary English, the sense of the original not being in the least intensified by the rugged orthography or mysterious vowel points):—

'Me an' thy mother, Sammy, has been talking of thee;
 Thou's been talkin' to mother, an' she's been a tellin' it me.
 Thou'll not marry for money—thou's sweet upon Parson's lass;
 No, thou'll marry for *love*—an' we both on us think thee an ass.
 Love! What's love? Thou can love thy lass and her money too—
 Making 'em go together, as they've good right to do.
 Couldn't I love thy mother, by cause of her money laid by?
 Nay, *for I loved her a vast sight more for it*—reason why.'

The youth of the country should ponder over these last wise and excellent sentiments.

III. 'IN MEMORIAM'

UNLIKE Tennyson's other poems, 'In Memoriam' will appeal to the sympathies of only a limited audience—those who have known that deepest sorrow of humanity, to stand by the grave of one beloved—a grief that made even the Redeemer weep. The emotions that crowd upon the soul at such an hour—the hopes, fears, doubts—the troubled questionings of a dark and silent future—the agonising, yet often vain efforts to pierce the gloom of the grave and realise the spirit walking in brightness beyond—are all echoed here, in the wild, broken chords of a trembling faith, or the soft music of

an assured hope, that will wake up tears again in many eyes.

The elegiac poems of Milton and Shelley, on the contrary, awaken sympathies of a wider range. They touch all hearts—all that are susceptible to grandeur of diction, richness of imagery, and fervour of passionate excitement; not merely those who have wept and suffered. They have raised temples where the illustrious dead lie in state of pomp and pall, while the whole universe, material and spiritual, is brought to mourn over the bier; and the pageant of beauty and sublimity affects the imagination irresistibly, though the heart, perhaps, may never have known the meaning of sorrow. Milton calls upon the vales and winds to mourn with him, and bids them

Bring the rathe primrose, that, forsaken, dies—
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine;
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet;
The glowing violet;
The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine;
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears,
To strew the laureat hearse where Lycid lies.

And in Shelley's gorgeous poem, what processions, dazzling the brain with glory and beauty, come fleeting and interminable, like the friezes of Grecian architecture, by the grave of Adonais! While Love conquers Death! and the light from the far heaven pours into the desolated soul, like starlight through a ruined temple, till even Scepticism chaunts the Hymn of Immortality.

In Tennyson's verses we find neither these gorgeous pageantries nor the vivid faith that recognises in Death the white-robed messenger of Glory. His sorrow is clothed in more ascetic raiment; the measure adopted throughout is grave and monotonous as the tread of pall-bearers: doubt and mistrust shadow his spirit in those first dark moments of bereavement, when the fiat which consigns youth, genius and virtue to the grave seems so unintelligible to human hearts, and his faith in the unseen glories behind the veil scarcely

rises beyond a vague *perhaps*. The mournings are but of one solitary soul, beside a lonely tomb, musing on thoughts common to all who mourn, only uttered in that exquisite word-music of which Tennyson is master. Yet the earnest, simple *truth* of the emotions portrayed constitutes the very charm that makes one linger fascinated, though saddened, over these canticles of sorrow and love.

The cry of the soul is too true and too mournful not to waken sympathy in all who have been tried with like suffering. The tears are not simulated. You feel them falling fresh and warm on the page as he writes ; and, though these records of a spirit militant extend over a period of seventeen years, yet we find no diminution of the sorrow, even while he is learning the sublime and spiritualising uses of affliction. Ever still we track his agonies and triumphs by his tears, as the path of the gladiator in the arena by his blood, whether the end be conquest or defeat.

But we have here more of the religious views worked out by suffering, the tendencies and aspirations, the human-heartedness and elevated philosophy, of the great poet's mind, than in any other of his works. Yet the faith never attains to the lofty calmness of Wordsworth, nor do the aspirations reach the sublimity of 'Festus.' Gentle, genial human tenderness, feelings that sympathise with all the common thoughts of common grief, doubting through human weakness, and aspiring through the force of human love—these are the characteristics throughout.

With what simple, natural grace, for instance, he tells how grief wrought in him to write :—

‘ I sing to him who rests below,
And since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.’

All familiar feelings are touched upon, and made to clang musically with loftier thoughts. The passing of the ‘dark house’ in ‘the long unlovely street’ :—

Doors where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand.'

The memories of the lost and loved that come thronging
round the Christmas hearth, though the gay pastimes are continued—

making vain pretence
Of gladness, *with an awful sense*
Of one mute shadow watching all.

The restless questioning of the spirit when some 'divinely
gifted man' is struck down in his youth, before the object of
his creation seems to have been realised—

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done—such things to be :
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

And the inner trouble vexes the soul—

The spectral doubt that makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more.
Though following with an upward mind,
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the Secular to be,
But evermore a Life behind.

These unquiet doubts, however, are conquered by the
strong love that worketh faith, and sees the dead with calm
eyes, standing like angels sustaining those who are still
wanderers in the dreary mists of life. How beautiful this
invocation !—

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near us when we climb or fall :
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger, other eyes, than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

But in the workings of the mind, as in the material world, light and darkness, tumult and peace are ever alternating ; and though he has fought with doubt, like Paul with beasts at Ephesus, yet the monster is hydra-headed, and springs to life again under new forms, whenever the mind feels the fatal limitation of the senses, which cannot guide her beyond the visible ; and he exclaims bitterly :—

‘ I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world’s altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God.’

Death seems to him now but ‘ The Shadow ’—

Who keeps the keys of all the Creeds ;

as if the true creed were to him still a barred mystery, and the plaints of the soul become what he himself terms them :—

Wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth.

Immortality rises before him, but as a dream of the imagination :—

When Lazarus left his charnel cave,
And home to Mary’s house returned,
Was this demanded—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by the grave ?

‘ Where wert thou, brother, those four days ?’
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

He appeals to nature. Shall

‘ Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll’d the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or sealed within the Iron Hills ?'

She answers :—

'Thou makest thine appeal to me ;
 I bring to Life, I bring to Death ;
 The Spirit does but mean the breath.
 I know no more.'

At length, after many efforts to tune the 'jarring lyre —

He fought his doubts, and gathered strength ;
 He would not make his judgment blind ;
 He faced the spectres of the mind,
 And laid them. Thus he came at length
 To find a stronger faith his own,
 And Power was with him in the night,
 Which makes the darkness and the light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,
 But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of gold.

The solemn but sanctifying meaning of that divinest
 lesson of Christianity is at last recognised, that sorrow works
 out purification ; and the man 'crowned with attributes of
 woe' has learned that 'life is not as idle ore,'

*But ^{iron} dug from the central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And battered with the shocks of doom*

*To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Fann, the sensual Feast,
 Move upward, working out the beast,
 And let the Ape and Tiger die.*

The faith which realises the spiritual presence of those di-
 vided from us by the grave is beautifully expressed in the
 lines commencing :—

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
 I hear thee where the waters run ;
 Thou standest in the rising sun
 And in the setting thou art fair.

They remind one of Goethe's often imitated but never equalled 'Ich denke dein' :—

I think of thee, when, o'er the ocean glancing,
 The sunlight gleams ;
 I think of thee, when, on the fountain dancing,
 The pale moon beams.

I see thee when, afar, the whirlwind tosses
 The dust-cloud light ;
 When the frail bridge the trembling wand'rer crosses
 At dead of night.

Again, we may compare the setting of the same thought in Bailey's poem of 'Festus,' where love also creates the faith in the invisible and immortal :—

I see thee in the dead of night,
 And the full life of day ;
 I know thee by a sudden light—
 It is thy soul, I say.
 If yonder stars be filled with forms
 Of breathing clay like ours,
 Perchance the space that spreads between
 Is for a Spirit's powers ;
 And loving as we too have loved,
 In spirit and in heart,
 Whether to space or star removed
 God will not bid us part.

Though the diction of the poem appears of the simplest form on a first perusal—sometimes even daring to be colloquial—yet a critical examination of the structure will show that it is, perhaps, even more artificial than any of Tennyson's preceding poems ; though he has already given abundant evidence in his verses of how much the industry of the artist aids the inspiration of the poet.

Lord Lytton, in the preface to the last edition of his works, states that he never accomplished anything in literature without laborious study. It would be well if writers with natures less gifted would learn from the great masters, that if even high genius requires intense study, application, and labour to bring a work to perfection, how much more will they all be needed to assist the inspirations of mediocrity !

WORLD LEADERS

THE schools of poetry, so scornfully characterised by Carlyle as the Border-thief school, the Cockney, and the Satanic, which ruled over the heart of this century during its childhood, have already vanished from the earth ; their influence has passed away ; their heroes have died out and become extinct. The heads and leaders, indeed, the authors of 'Marmion' and 'The Giaour' still wear, and will for ever wear their crowns in the Valhalla of the ages ; but their imitators and disciples are no more. A new race of poets has arisen, and the commencement of a new epoch has been marked by the simultaneous tendency of all writers, whether of prose or verse, towards the elaboration of truth, as the aim and reward of all their mental toil ; the deep eternal truth which lies at the base of all human life.

Of these great teachers, with their world-wide sympathies, human tenderness, profound love for the good and beautiful, and scorn of the untrue, who proudly stand on the summit of the age, and preach earnestness, faith, truth, and self-reverence in all life work, Carlyle may be named the leader in philosophy and Ruskin in art ; whilst fiction has its crowd of witnesses, and poetry its priesthood, all devoted to the same high mission.

All these writers—poets, whether in prose or verse—aim at representing in their works the tendencies of the time towards Truth, Light, and Freedom.

In the 'Sartor Resartus' of Carlyle is depicted, with that quaint humour and pathetic eloquence in which he has no

rival or equal, the progress of a human soul from doubt to faith. In Bailey's 'Festus' we have the history of every human soul, symbolised by the history of one in its progress from sin to suffering, and through suffering to purification and redemption ; while in 'Aurora Leigh' we stand before our unveiled social life, and see the eternal war between deep true human feeling and false shallow conventionalism : and the grand superiority of nature's nobility over the mere aristocracy of castes and circles is asserted and proved.

'Time in Dreamland' belongs also to this modern philosophical school, and is distinguished by the same high aims. The subject is the history, not as in 'Festus,' of a single soul working out its own purification through suffering, but of the great soul of humanity itself considered in its unity—its moral evolution and growth through the progressive intellectual development of the race.

Humanity is a thought of God, and human history its manifestation ; this is the idea of the poem.

The world-plan unfolds itself to the author as a gradual revelation or incarnation of this divine thought. But he proceeds by no mere historical sequence ; he rejects details, and selects his illustrations only from those philosophical epochs distinguished by their essential nature, as influencing the development of the soul ; periods which some grand and sudden apocalypse of intellect made splendid, fruitful, and elevating, and the effects of which were permanent upon the moral condition of the human race.

These remarkable epochs of mental advance when the soul seems to receive a fresh impetus, and rushes onward to the light, are always found illuminated by the name of some *one* great man ; for all history shows that individuals alter the world, not the masses. These are the men to whom power is given to pierce the depths of human sympathy, and touch the springs of human thought. Their object is always mental freedom ; for thought must precede action as light preceded creation. The mental view of things must be cleared before the brain will stir the muscles of the arm to dare and do.

And it is strange, though a sure proof of the innate grandeur of the soul of man, that no great flame of enthusiasm ever yet was kindled in the world for anything that concerned merely the physical bettering of human condition.

Man has the permanency of an animal in his mere animal habits—the eating, drinking, clothing, sheltering modes of life ; there it is always hard to move the masses ; there they are always suspicious or careless of change. But when the spark touches the mental nature, when the soul comes in contact with an idea, a mere abstraction that seems in no way connected with man's daily life, then enthusiasm burns fiercely and irresistibly, and overbears all opposition. Liberty, Truth, Patriotism, these are but words ; yet for such words only are men found willing to die. For there is no true life but in the soul, and it is only in those high moments, when the heart is lifted above the transitory into the eternal, and all that holds of the Godlike within us is aroused, that we have the sublime consciousness of our privileges as a race ‘only a little lower than the angels.’

The prophets and teachers whose aim in life was to lift human souls to this elevation are the heroes of Frazer Corkran's poem. The men who, in their age, advanced the landmarks of knowledge and planted their banners on the reclaimed space, inscribed for all time with their name ; who fought the battle of life bravely for the sake of an idea, but an idea that could free the soul and regenerate humanity. Cosmocrators—world-leaders—the old Platonists would call them. Carlyle names them heroes ; Emerson, representative men ; but all alike have the one object, the spiritual and intellectual elevation of mankind. And the period of time selected, wherein such men best acted out their destiny as regenerators, is that wondrous era of mental development dating from the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the close of the sixteenth century ; a period which included the grandest discoveries—the greatest men—the sublimest manifestations of art, and the most important events that ever influenced the mental progress of our race ; events whose pulsations still vibrate in the great heart of the

world. A new continent was discovered, and the ocean path to India opened, the kingdoms of Europe were consolidated, national languages organised and perfected, literature was freed from its monastic bondage and diffused to the millions by the invention of printing, philosophers weighed the stars, while navigators were revealing the earth, and science rose from the knowledge of facts to laws. Civil freedom was established on the ruins of feudalism, and religious freedom was won by Luther from a tyrannical and demoralised priesthood.

Whatever is most beautiful in Christian architecture, sculpture, and painting falls within this period. All the great artists were living then ; and while Michael Angelo raised a firmament of marble to heaven, Raphael filled the Vatican with forms of ideal beauty. Centuries have passed by, but still this century remains unsurpassed. In art, science and literature, religion and government, the soul was liberated in light, freedom, and beauty ; and the old world rose regenerated from a baptism of intellectual glory.

The events and the men of such an era form a magnificent programme for a poem ; while the requirements are indeed great that could do them justice : a philosophic intellect, the comprehensive learning of the student, the lyric power of the poet, and much of the sad wisdom of life ; yet the author is never beneath either his subject or his purpose. In every line there is the inspiration of a calm, noble, reflective mind ; and with a generous enthusiasm the temple doors have been opened wide to all great souls, no matter what their sect or calling. All who have gained or given rights to humanity find welcome to the brotherhood of the Heroes of the World.

Historic truth, meanwhile, has been carefully preserved, and the historic characters are so faithfully drawn that the poem comes to us like a voice that has traversed the ages and spoken with the men of all time, in their own language, and in sympathy with their own thoughts.

The fall of Byzantium was the fall of an epoch of the world ; the close of a cycle which began when ancient Rome 'perished like a mammoth in a drift of northern snows ;' and

ended when the last of the Eastern Cæsars fell beneath the sword of Mahomet.

A thousand years separated these two events ; seven hundred of which are stigmatised in history as 'The Dark Ages'—dark through ignorance, and barbarous through poverty, during which period, says Hallam, 'but two really great men appeared in literature, John, surnamed Scotus, of Ireland, and Pope Silvester II.'

From the twelfth century light began to dawn, and the elemental strivings of human intellect towards development can be detected. Dante and Giotto were 'The Witnesses' in the fourteenth century ; and ever stronger and brighter grew the light till it culminated in the splendour of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

But, truly, when Byzantium fell, in the middle of the fifteenth century ; when the Eastern empire lay waste and desolate ; its Christian altars overthrown, its children fugitives, and the triumph of barbarism seemed complete over the luxurious civilisation of a thousand years, no one could have foreseen that, from these very smouldering ashes of a ruined empire, Western Europe was to gain all its light. Yet such was the hidden plan of Providence. The cultivated Greeks, who fled from their fallen capital, carried with them their science, arts, language, literature, and refinements of civilisation ; and thus the Greek mind, with its high culture, was flung upon half-barbarous Western Europe, and gave that immense irrepressible stimulus to thought which produced all that has made modern Europe what it is.

Florence and the Medici were foremost to offer the fugitives a sanctuary, and in return they gave Florence and the Medici their glory. From Duke Cosmo, who welcomed them, down to the pontificate of his grandson, Leo X., all that was eminent throughout Italy, in learning, philosophy, and the fine arts, owed its origin to Greek teaching, and Italy radiated the light that kindled souls throughout the world.

The great epochs of development which followed this event are brilliantly illustrated in Mr. Corkran's poem. It is a

synthesis of human progress, thrown into the poetic form—sometimes narrative, sometimes dramatic—with all the light concentrated upon the representative man of each epoch ; for in every deliverance from bondage there is a Moses ; for every great idea given to the world, there is some one living man its exponent to the age in which it is revealed. Thus, the vital life of history is reflected, not its details ; the life within the life : it is the privilege of the poet to grasp and illustrate results ; details are for the statist and politician, but the poet stands in the centre where all radii meet, and follows out each line of human life to where it blends with the Infinite and Eternal.

By the author of 'Time in Dreamland,' the significance of each historical event is measured only by its influence on the eternal element within man's nature. His epic is the liberation of the soul, with its manifestations and triumphs ; and the only heroes he recognises are the men who, in whatsoever mode they teach or preach, by art, science, moral nobleness, or heroic action, show to the world that every onward step in human perfectness is a true manifestation of the divinity in humanity.

As it is the soul's history, the soul alone perceives it. A vision falls upon the poet, in which, unfettered by the laws of duration or space, he beholds the whole great era of human progress revolve before him through its zodiac of living lights. It is 'An Hour in Dreamland,' but that hour is a century. The poem opens with a pretty prologue in which the poet and his wife discuss the ideas of the age :—

' Tremendous social questions, waiting for
The purifying powers of thought and time.
" The Rights of Woman "—woman *hath* great rights,
And well she uses them. Hers is the right
To form the infant mind, to sow the seeds
Of knowledge and of virtue, and to strike
Deep through the unsteady soul the piles on which
God's Temple, character, must firm be built.

' Hath she no wrongs ?
Hath heaven no wrongs ? What do we not profane ?
Save her at least from equal rights of sin.'

From the present age the philosopher is led back to consider the origin of all the great ideas which now influence mankind, with the epochs that produced them, and finds that

Enterprises influencing deep
The destinies of states and mankind's fate
Are ever wrought by *one inspired man* ;
Men who gave their lives
For the world, and whom the world hated.

Great forward leaps
Followed by fainting falls have marked Time's course,
Each revelation to mankind vouchsafed
Hath come encompassèd by mighty storms.
Each gift from Heaven
Hath claimed its price in combat, for without
Battle unto the death is nought obtained.

Then, as in a vision, he beholds a great crowd standing in the sunlight—a lustrous crowd with calm majestic eyes. And a voice tells him whom he is looking upon :—

By psalmists, prophets, stand the wise of Greece,
Plato, Pythagoras, and Socrates !
And Rome's majestic Pagan heroes give
To mightier Fathers of the Church the hand.

They are gathered together to look upon the fall of Byzantium, while Michael the Archangel stands by the soul of the dead Constantine and unfolds before him the new phase of human history which is to rise from the ruins of his empire. He shows him the Spirit of Truth going forth from Heaven to preach a new evangel to man ; and the Spirit of Falsehood swift following from Hell to turn all virtues into vices. Thus, by her influence, reverence for authority becomes abject slavery ; religion becomes fanaticism, and human freedom changes to the wildest licence and infidelism. But still

Truth rises fresh
From the eternal combat with the false.
The conquest of the worst lasts but a day,
The ever-living word immortal burns.

Then the vision changes, and the poet sees

Those Grecian wise
Whose features Raphael to us revealed
When Athens' school arose before his eyes.

Their eyes are bent upon fair Florence, where the fugitive
Greeks of fallen Byzantium have found repose—

And pay
The merchant Cosmo back with deathless fame.

Already out of evil has sprung forth good, and the first sparks
of intellectual power in Europe rise from the ashes of the
empire which the Turk had trampled beneath his feet. A
description follows of the Court of Lorenzo 'the Magnificent,'
with his learned friends Mirandola the poet, and the quaint
Ficino the Platonist, and how in their warm philosophic
enthusiasm

They wept o'er Socrates as 'twere to-day
He drank the hemlock and spoke words divine ;
Discoursed of Plato—how he taught
That love of the Creator leads to love
Of all which doth show forth our Maker's laws.

But the vision changes again suddenly from these refined and
spiritual Platonists to the tragedy of the Pazzi—a conspiracy
instigated by Pope Sixtus IV. against the Medici, whose
towns he coveted and whose glory he envied. Falsehood has
now her hours of triumph, masked in the garb of religion ;
Giuliano, brother to the great Lorenzo, is stabbed by a priest
as he kneels to receive the Host at the altar, and Lorenzo him-
self is wounded, but not slain. He lives for vengeance ; and,
by his orders Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa, head of the con-
spiracy, and two priests beside, are hung in the streets of
Florence, while the crowd shout—' Unto the Pazzi death ! '

Savonarola now appears upon the scene—the inspired,
doomed Dominican ; with his fierce denunciations against sin,
whether beneath the cowl or the tiara ; his fiery wrath against
all that taints and corrupts the soul ; and his burning words

of love, tenderness, and pity, for all human weakness ; the divine-souled yet human-hearted man who wrote these words : 'I entered the cloister to learn how to suffer ; and when sufferings visited me, I made a study of them ; and they taught me to love always, and to forgive always.' The vision passes on and shows us Savonarola in prison with the patriot Machiavelli, and Saint Augustine is seen weeping in heaven with his mother Monica, while they gaze on Florence—

Behold, she said, yon martyrs who redeem
The wickedness of men with agonies.

And then comes the death-tragedy ; there is an altar in the market-place—but the altar is of faggots piled for a funeral pyre, and the victim is Savonarola

Bound in the talons of a fiery woe.

But

Where in the market-place the people see
A felon burning—angel eyes discerned
A sacrifice.

Again, a prison :—

There a wan, old man ; a dungeon deep
And men with faces clammy as cold walls,
And hearts unfeeling as the flag they tread,
Stand pen in hand—and no confession comes.
Nature can bear no more—he swoons, he swoons !
Nicholas Machiavelli swoons in sleep
As the deep grave profound. His towering mind
Boundless as space and time, thick thronged with stars,
Is trampled out as by the foot of beast.

Falsehood has had her revenge in martyrdom ; but the torch of truth that fell from the hand of the dead Savonarola is grasped by the young Luther, and the miner's son kindles a blaze in Germany that speedily lights the world.

Truth flies from Papal Italy ; and we behold her next standing by the side of the aged Guttenburg, at the moment of success, when intellectual freedom has been achieved by his discovery. Faust, and his daughter, Faustine, appear upon

the scene to share his joy, with Schoeffer, Guttenburg's assistant, who is the lover of the young Faustine. But their marriage had been opposed by her father for want of means. Guttenburg, the lone, old man, who has no passion but science, no joys but in contemplating its grand results, and to whom both fame and fortune would now come too late—generously imparts the secret to his assistant, which enables him to win bride, and fame, and fortune, all together, and thus the triumph of intellect becomes the sacrament of love, for—

Upon the marriage-altar of this pair,
See the first printed Holy Bible laid ;
Thronged down the angels ; they that temple filled,
And from the temple, up to space and space,
A broadening beam of angels, to the Throne !
Truth held the Bible in her own fair hands,
While Falsehood, scathed and wounded, fled the light.
Yet breathed she still, in consciousness that yet
The struggle was not o'er for many an age.

Again the vision changes. The human mind has already sprung to adolescence, and over all the broad continent of Europe can be traced the strong efforts of the soul to liberate itself in all modes of human life, social, political, and moral.

Luther smites down corruption as with an archangel's sword and the Reformation is achieved.

Feudalism sinks beneath the keen-edged wit of Erasmus ; and the civil and sacerdotal tyrannies, which for a thousand years had 'ground down men's bones to a pale unanimity,' tremble and fall before the strong words of a few earnest, heroic men.

Science, too, at the same moment, by maritime discovery, opened the ocean highways to commercial freedom and a universal brotherhood of nations. The men of the epoch pass before us as in a vision, grand and calm in the consciousness of all they have achieved. Let us arrest some of these majestic shadows as they pass.

Two men are standing by a vessel's stern, one, Martin Bezem, who gave the Brazils to Portugal ; the other a despised

Jew, but the inventor of the astrolabe, by whose aid navigators dared to track the wild wide ocean ; yet here, as upon all blessings given to man, falsehood contrives to set her curse. The ship that brings the tidings to King John of Portugal of his new possession brings also a cargo of human slaves, the first offering these rich lands lay at his feet. ‘The star-seer is the slave maker.’

Then Columbus passes along the scene—

A sweet, composed, and gentle man,
Eyes deep and full, as if they drank in heaven.

First we see him a wanderer at the Courts of unbelieving monarchs, with no proof to offer for the world he promised save his own intense faith—‘Faith, the soul’s sense, that to the Infinite soars.’

The cold, crafty Ferdinand of Spain, however, is too intent on expelling the Moors, that he may plunder their fair cities, to heed him, save

With scornful eye, and cold deceptive smile,
But, whilst he is surrounded by his knights ;
A goodly sight in sun-flamed coats of mail,
His saintly and heroic Isabel,
Attracted by the glorious light of Truth
Over his countenance suffused, gives ear
Unto Columbus looking grandly poor.

Upon Columbus, Isabel her eyes
Turned their full orb’d weightiness of strength,
And his blenched not. There was a breadth of calm,
A purity and gentleness, diffused
Over the visage of that marvellous man ;
And in his darkly glowing eyes, a depth
Of patient power which the Queen subdued
To equalising sympathy. She asked,
With sweet serenity of smile, the road
Which to those unknown kingdoms rightly led !
Thereupon to her he told the tale
Of agitated hopes that round his mind
Shook like a bannered army.
She paused in silent prayer: what passed within

The infinite world of her soul, there were
Around me hosts of spirits who could tell,
But on mine own the mortal veil still hung.
I could but watch and listen, and I heard
As Isabel bent down her head, these words :—
' I'll pledge my jewels for this enterprise '
That whispered word gave to Castile a world.

This description is beautiful ; also the account of the approach of Columbus to that new world, hitherto seen only in his dreams, believed in only by faith. Winged messengers come to him ' over the waters to his Ark,' prophetic of success.

But Falsehood follows quick to mar the good and blight the blessing. By her promptings, Christian men, under the plea of religion, murder from lust of gold ; while in Spain, the Inquisition, under the banner of the cross, tortures and kills for the sake of God, and shrieks of agony from the victims of both hemispheres rise together before the throne of the Highest.

A ghastly crowd of victims makes a wall between heaven and the terrible Torquemada, who sinks back to utter darkness, and retribution falls on Spain, for from that hour her gold and her glory began to depart from her.

Another scene of the drama, and Erasmus is before us, his delicate feeble frame contrasting with his giant mind ; and Luther, the last great hero of the century, the man who, above all others, influenced Europe ; who rent the human mind from its old moorings, and gave that impetus to religion, and civil and intellectual freedom, which still vibrates throughout the world. We see him first, the young monk of Erfurth, struggling in such mental agonies with the dawning truth that his frame wasted, and he often fell down insensible, till the monks restored him by soft low music. Then, warring against the visible devil at Wartburg—warring against and conquering that false fiend—

Who never in his proudest hours of might
Dared meet a man whose soul rose fixed on God.

Again we see him, the apostle of spiritual freedom, commissioned by the Almighty, standing in the might and power

of that divine diploma undaunted before the Council at Augsburg, before his subtle enemy the Cardinal Legate, and the chief amongst Italian and German nobility ; see there this solitary, humble, low-born, spirit-worn monk, prostrating his body three times in the abject humility of old servitude before the proud Cardinal ; but again, the next moment, with bold inspired force and eloquence, he smites down one after another the hollow shadows they oppose to the truth, till the legate's face grew white with wrath, and his heart quailed, and he dismissed the assembly with a faint sarcasm on the man he could not confute. The monk had conquered. The weary worn ascetic that day lit a torch whose light still burns after three hundred years.

Some striking lines may be found in the scene where the tempter tries to dissuade Luther from his work of Reformation by fear of the results. He tells him—

The rude peasants
Tumultuously meet in arms. They say
The light that thou hast let into their hearts
Shows their condition to be brutes, not men.

Luther answers :—

Combat's the test of Truth. Good men and brave
Baptise their faith in blood.
The world is all a battle-ground—each man
At battle to himself, by battle tried.

Again the tempter pleads by the beauty and the blessedness of 'Peace.' Luther answers :—

That is to say, corruption :
When it doth mean submission unto ill ;
When it doth mean surrender of the man—
His heart, his soul, his thoughts to priestly powers ;
The abdication of his royal rights ;
Peace doth stagnating rottenness become.

The results of Luther's teaching are then sketched boldly and vividly. The peasants gather round their watch-fires at night with low mutterings of bright hopes and stern resolve to

claim or take their rights. They demand freedom from the oppression of the nobles ; from the greed and tyranny of the Church ; and the last words rang on the listener's ears ' like a hymn of holiest justice.'

Chivalrous Barons in brave council sit,
 Passing bright Rhenish round, and lo ! a spy
 Reports the *immethodical rude strength*,
In which enthusiasm breathes a living soul.

A sound word from a sound heart has rushed like a storm upon the old social systems of Europe and shivered them to dust. Men begin to think, to reason, to compare the dogmas of the Church and the codes of kings with the original handwriting of God upon the tables of the heart ; and steel-girded chiefs 'shake in their armour when a true voice speaks.'

'The Peasants' War' flames up throughout all Germany, and heroes are with them to lead them or to die for them :—

The patriots Hutten, Sickingen, and Goetz—
 Great hearts which stormy sunset's flame sublime
 Do swathe with soft rich beauty.

The sympathising Alps flash signals back ; the watch-fires of freedom flush every mountain-peak like sunset, and Zwingly associates his name for ever with his country as the apostle and the martyr of Switzerland.

Heaven hath lighted up with sacred fire
 The Alps' stupendous altar. Victory
 Shines from the mountain to reflecting lake,
 And looks into the watcher's tears with light.

Thus everywhere from the liberated earth to heaven rises up the hymn of thanksgiving for the passage from darkness to light, from bondage to freedom. Meanwhile Falsehood has raised up an agent to mar the good work ; for, according to the idea of the poem, Falsehood follows Truth perpetually as her shadow—a powerful agent gifted with zeal, courage, energy, and strong will, equal to Luther's own ; a man of

heroic endurance, infinite self-devotion and abnegation ; yet whose aim, while he fancies he is doing God's work, is only to bind the fetters again upon the freed mind of man !

This was Ignatius Loyola, who, recoiling from Luther's doctrines in direst antagonism, stabbed to death every vital energy, every human feeling, every independent mental effort in his disciples, and left only one principle remaining—a mute, blind, passive, unquestioning *obedience*.

Contrasting strongly with Loyola is a sketch of Calvin—the founder of Republicanism in Christianity—Calvin, with his cold, pure intellect, resolute will, and terrible zeal—the type after which fashioned themselves the republicans of Cromwell and the stern old heroes of 'The Covenant.'

The vision passes on now to the tragic scenes of 'Saint Bartholomew ;' and the spirit of fierce hatred and bigotry that produced that darkest chapter in religious history is traced to the teaching of Loyola's disciples the Jesuits.

It is the night of the massacre : Catherine, the Queen Mother, has just given her daughter Marguerite in marriage to Henry of Navarre, whom she destines to be the first of her victims :—

The Huguenots are in the snare at last,
For Catherine hath with her own fair child
The scene obscuring incantation crowned.

Then a moan, like human sorrow, is heard among the spirits in Heaven, and a voice tells :—

They are Medicis,
Who felt the Pazzi's dagger at the mass ;
And mourn in Heaven, to see that one of theirs—
A woman, too, of their own house and kin—
Hath gone beyond the Pazzi's crime profane.

While the bell tolls for the massacre, Falsehood and the Evil One, triumphant and exultant, chant the death-song of the victims and the progress of the assassins.

But the next scene shows us retribution following closely on crime, in the death of the miserable weak-minded Charles IX. :—

One night he broke from tortured sleep, and stood
Before his mother, in a rain of blood,
Wrenched by remorse from his mad heart,
Through every pore, as if a drop were claimed,
With its life particle, for every life
Taken in the massacre. So died King Charles.

Meanwhile, the spirit of Loyola is working in Spain also, producing the dark cruelties and crimes of the bigot, the stern-hearted Philip ; while the spirit of Luther—the spirit of truth and freedom—rushes up in light from the swamps of Holland, making the name of the Netherlands synonymous in history with heroism and glory, and Falsehood trembles before

These children of no soil ;
These dwellers on the land where dwells the sea.

A grand scene follows : the defence of Leyden, made memorable by that splendid act of William of Orange, who, finding no other way to dislodge the enemy, ordered the dykes to be broken, and thus, submerged his country to save his country. Falsehood sees with dread that

Midst these unfavoured shoals, where man hath nought
Save his own right unconquerable soul,
A true, strong man hath risen.

This true, strong man must be got rid of ; this man who stands right in the way of bigotry and oppression. And the Jesuit Balthazar, the disciple of Loyola, is found a ready instrument for the dark deed.

William of Orange, the lionhearted defender of his country's rights, is assassinated by the secret orders of Philip of Spain, who vainly thinks that truth and freedom will fall by the same blow. But, as he falls, England grasps the flag of freedom from the dying hero and nurtures it evermore upon English soil.

Henceforth Spain and England represent the two antagonistic forces of Truth and Falsehood. One comes with the might of the Armada, haughty in power, certain of triumph,

dares, and *fails*. The other, strong in right, humble in spirit, dares, and *conquers*. Then comes the award of divine justice. Philip of Spain, the gloomy, relentless bigot, dies a loathsome mass of corruption, haunted by the image of his own murdered son ; while the murdered William of Orange beholds from heaven his grandson mount the throne of England ; the representative to the world of those eternal human rights for which he had fought and fallen. And the poem ends with a chant of glory to England and her mighty Shakespeare, whom the poet considers as the result and crowning of the great century whose storms had produced him.

A genius cradled in the Armada storm
And in his magnitude of deathless song
Will mankind grow familiar with an age
The greatest in the world, because it brought,
'Through its capacity, this genius forth,
Its glories full incarnated in him.

Even these few fragmentary quotations will prove the beauty of the work, which abounds in passages that are vigorous in thought, epigrammatic in terseness, and resonant with harmony of expression.

Nor does the poem fail to touch by sympathy while it elevates by admiration. The characters are not abstractions merely. A human heart vibrates in each of them, and some natural touch of affection shows the human tenderness with the divine power.

'All heroes,' says Fichte, 'offer up their lives for the race. Every thing great and good on which our age rests has been bought by the sacrifices made by the heroes of the past for ideas ;' and he defines the hero—'Heroes are men who sacrifice life and its enjoyments for the sake of the idea. They enter into a new life-element of spiritual clearness and purity, whereby life in any other form becomes absolutely distasteful to them.'

But what have we that is not bought with suffering ? by lives that toil on in darkness and gloom to hew out for others the elements of heat and light. World-saviours and light-

bringers, all are doomed, like the workers at the Gobelins tapestry, to work a life-long ever at the bright threads, but at the *back* of the picture—never seeing the result, never hearing the praise. Yet, one day the work is done, and then, face upward to the light of heaven, it meets the admiration of the world, but—the worker is in his grave.

CHARLES KEAN AS KING RICHARD

KEAN'S Richard the Third was a glorious triumph of art and genius. All that the most consummate artist or poet could conceive as necessary to the delineation of this wonderful creation of Shakespeare he realised. And of all Shakespeare's heroes, Richard demands the highest amount of power, varied energy and artistical skill in an actor.

In fact the mere reading of the play gives no idea of the strong terrible nature which it incarnates, compared to that which can be evolved by the genius of a great actor. Simple phrases one scarcely notices in the reading become of a tremendous significance in the acting. Kean's very silence at times thrilled one with a sense of coming horror that no words could awaken. His face, too, was cast in the very mould of genius. The broad, bold, convex forehead ; the full artistical brows, shadowing his dark flashing, glowing, fierce, tender, scathing, loving eyes—eyes full of all imaginable antithesis—at least they seemed all this and more in that all-comprehending, ever-changing character of Richard. There could be no finer study for a painter than to watch how that expressive countenance of his mirrored all these changes, from the stormiest energy of reckless ambition to the cold, cutting, sarcastic bitterness of the diplomatist, or the subtle insinuating flatteries of the wooer, who knows not only human nature, but, what is more, woman's nature so well that he can tread all its mazes with the easy security of certain victory ; for though the scene with Lady Anne is in the highest degree *improbable*, yet it is not *impossible* that a woman could love a

man through crime, when he swears that these crimes were committed solely for love of her ; and Kean's consummate acting in this scene—the daring avowals at once of crime and love—the courage and the passion blended so bewilderingly together, might have tempted stronger hearts and clearer heads even than poor Lady Anne's into a belief of his truth.

Nothing could be finer either than his attitudes, all superbly statuesque—the *pose* firm yet free—the outlines so clear and well defined, that they impress themselves on the memory like those which Greece has transfixed eternally in marble ; while in the ever-fluctuating curves of his expressive mouth there was an eloquence, power, passion, dignity, and sensibility that no painter could ever adequately imitate. It was the soul itself that was revealed there.

Of all the characters of Shakespeare, Richard is the one which gives most scope for the display of powerful and comprehensive genius. No other of the Shakespearean creations has the same severe, concentrated unity of purpose with endless diversity of action. The character of Richard is a grand study of humanity. Here is a tremendous idea standing visibly face to face with you, glaring into you, yet not shadowed by the impossible—a man struggling single-handed against fate, destiny, earth, heaven, and hell—the visible and invisible—the terrors of Tartarus and Gehenna—and yet never faltering. From the first we feel the sombre grandeur of his powerful nature. 'Sin, death, and hell have set their mark upon him.' His youth 'frightful, desperate, wild and furious ; his manhood daring, bold and venturous ; his age confirmed, proud, subtle, sly and bloody.'

All the elements of a mighty mind are found in him : ambition, energy, an iron will, haughty self-reliance, a clear and piercing intuition, that sees through the souls of men, and how tame and commonplace they seem, measured by his standard ! Vapid, weak wavering fools—'shallow Richmond'—'the fearful and despairing Henry'—'deep, revolving, witty Buckingham'—as he terms him in scorn. He feels

within him the right, because he has the power, to dominate above all these ; and he sees through *himself*. No vanity blinds him ; he has the courage to look well upon himself—what few have ; he is sensitive, painfully sensitive, like all genius, to his personal defects, for genius has an imperial spirit, and would reign by all and over all—beauty, wealth, station—by whatever confers *power* ; for to attain this is the instinctive aspiration of all such natures.

Ambition is peculiarly the passion of great minds. It is the aspiration after a sphere of those who feel within them the capability of filling one. The ambition of such is not the vulgar passion for the possession of an object, be it a fortune or a crown, but a passionate desire for the *power* which accompanies such possession, enabling the hand to execute what the soul conceives. Every great soul has necessarily an unlimited thirst for power. It must have room, freedom, liberty to evidence itself, or it writhes in torments unutterable. Let every soul amongst us who has a spark of the divine fire judge this for himself. Does he not feel born to reign ?—to be a king over men ? Do not all the tinsel pretensions of law-made elevations fill him with a bitter sense of injustice, as if these feeble, hereditary possessors of power had usurped his place ? And so they have, for the true king is the man who is born mentally greater than other men. So, amongst all around him, Richard feels, and we feel, that his is the only hand strong enough to hold the sceptre. The elements of his nature are all grand ; if they had not been so perverted in the exercise he might have made the greatest of kings ; for his acts are neither from impulse nor passion : these are the motive powers of inferior minds. He has not the feline cruelty of Nero nor the brute ferocity of Caligula ; nor is he depravedly sensual in his egoism, like Tiberius. *He has no passions*—only one great aim, which fills up his existence—*power*. He sees at once that he cannot rule through Beauty or Love, that he cannot grasp the delicate fibres of hearts ; but rule he must—it is necessary to his existence. So he resolves it shall be by station, position—by force of will. Once

resolved he flings all the concentrated volition of his mighty nature into this one idea. Now, with this unswerving resolution, this courage that never quails, give the moral sense that shrinks from crime, and we have the type of the hero-man—potent, self-reliant, his nature centred deep and sure on an inflexible purpose. We may learn something even from Richard, for not even crimes can sully the eternal beauty of *courage*. This severe concentrated volition gives something supernatural to his power. He is terrible as one of the primal Titans warring against Olympus. We tremble at the human spirit that rises up thus before us, dim and shadowy in its vast proportions like one of the genii of Eastern fable, still growing more vast and terrible as we gaze, until the colossal properties seem to fill the whole field of vision, and we feel that nothing human can stand before it. From the moment he is resolved he treads onward, cold and inexorable as fate, irresistible as a blind and silent destiny, terrible and swift as the lightning; all that stands in the line of that dread course is blasted, must perish. Yet there is no passion in his cruelty, no revenge in his murders, no desire in his love. He is a man without one human emotion. The blood in his veins is iced and frozen as the North Sea. His heart is cold, bleak, and lonely as a peak of the Apennines; he marches on to his aim with a relentless fatality like the unswerving laws of nature; for, in truth, volition is in its essence almost omnipotent. We do not yet know all that this mighty power within us can accomplish, because we do not test it to the utmost. What is the power within us which we are told can move mountains, if it be not volition? In all common minds it is weak, therefore they fail; but in all great minds we find the same fierce resiliency of the will against all opposing obstacles, which makes them for the time omnipotent. A hero-man is one who would swim the Rubicon with Caesar or burn his ships with Cortez. But earth gives few such men, and, when one does arise, he dominates over his fellows by reason solely of his stronger will: for men rule the minds of others in the direct ratio of the intensity of their volition.

All Richard's crimes are in a grand artistical unity with this lofty, unyielding, concentrated nature of his, and in the unity is the grandeur of the character as a work of art. All weakness, tenderness is forbidden ; the weeping wife, the bereaved mother, the murdered children, he has no tears for them. His march is still onward, his glance still upward ; he cannot pause to look at the poor worms that are writhing beneath his foot. One touch of ordinary human nature would have marred the unity, weakened the vast outline of this terrible conception of a will that nothing human could influence. One moment of hesitation, one thrilling of a human fibre, one pang of remorse, and the unity is lost—he comes within the measure of a man. But there are none such ; and in the tremendous fidelity with which Kean sustained the ideal in the character, and the genius with which he grasped and comprehended all the details of its Titanic proportions, was evinced a mind almost equal in power to that of the poet who created it.

We see Richard's character from the very first : the egoism that walls him round like ice from all human sensibilities—'I that did never weep,' he says ; the doomed loneliness of his existence, isolated as Satan's from all human sympathies—'I that have neither pity, love, nor fear ;' the gloom and mystery of his destiny which seems to sever him from human ties, with them, but not of them—'I have no brother, I am like no brother ;' the strong, defiant spirit with whom success is nature, for in his own words, 'Fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns ;' the deep, subtle dissimulation that can smile and murder while he smiles ; the haughty self-reliance—'I am myself alone !' he exclaims. And what fierce demon energy and 'cold premeditation' in that speech where his dark purpose first takes a shape in words : 'Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all !' Yet with this dark soul, almost without the pale of humanity, thus laid before us, our sympathies throughout are with Richard, and herein is one of the greatest triumphs of Shakespeare's genius. It is, in fact, to produce this effect that courage is given to him ; for courage is sublime, and

in itself, and by itself alone, is capable of casting a gloomy grandeur over the criminal, though it does not lessen the horror of the crime. We feel this grandeur in the Titan struggle which he maintains against earth and heaven, the living and the dead. He inspires awe, *but he has no weaknesses to excite contempt* ; and, with all his crimes, he makes us feel that our nature has something yet unfathomed, something glorious in the extent of its powers, when one iron will can have such a repulsive force against a universe.

Everywhere comes this terrible volition—direct, potent, irresistible as a flash of lightning. The whole interest is concentrated on him. This man of crime, and power, and destiny is a hero Æschylus might have chosen. The clear defined outline of his nature rises up with a sort of sculptured distinctness from amidst the commonplace that surrounds him. We feel that he incarnates a grand fragment of a grand nature, and when he falls we tremble, though we cannot mourn, to see so mighty a spirit prostrate. We hold our breath, we shudder at the stroke that is to doom this colossal force to annihilation. One looks for portents when he dies. A star seems to have shot from space into the abysses. No waves of common life can rush in and fill up the void. His place is vacant on earth, as Lucifer's in heaven.

Kean fully and nobly comprehended this ideal, and flung his soul free and fetterless, with the true abandonment of a possession, into the character. In the first scene, where he kills the king, some critics have objected that he was too passionless ; but this very coolness, on the contrary, proved his just conception of the character. There is no passion in Richard ; when it does appear it is only feigned for a purpose. It is not from impulse or excitement he kills Henry, but from cold premeditation. He is throughout only watching his opportunity. There is no hatred, no anger, no passion ; he is calm, cold, and relentless as fate. His aim is fixed ; whoever stands in the path of it must fall, king or woman, prince or child, the aged Henry, or 'the gallant springing brave Plantagenet ;' he crushes them with scarce a *thought*, without

one human emotion. He goes on direct, deadly, impassible as the electric fluid ; they stand in his path, he passes, and they lie scathed and blasted in his track.

In Milton's Satan there is envy, remorse, despair. Richard is grander : he has none of these, only a terrible concentrated volition. From the time the golden circlet of fire is on his brow he is superb. Even though the dusky shades from Tartarus rise up all dripping with the blood he has shed ; still he fights foot to foot against heaven and earth. There is heroism, courage in it. He rises from a man to the lofty proportions of a fallen angel, defiant, powerful, terrible as Lucifer. His haughty reliance on himself never forsakes him. Defections from his cause follow quick on one another ; still he will not stoop either to keep or gain an ally. When Buckingham, his tool and instrument, sues him for the promised reward, with what insolent impatience he flings him off as he would shake a stinging insect from his hand ! There is no room in his mind for gratitude or fear, or any idea not connected necessarily with his grand aim. What superb contempt there was in Kean's 'Thou troublest me ; I am not in the vein !' But the sombre foreshadowings of his destiny are gathering thick around him, and his eye has a thoughtful, visionary glare when he bids them 'Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.' Some terrible shadowy forms are present to him rising from the abyss of the past. He speaks not, but we feel them gaining on him, absorbing him in their dark shadows. We know the Invisible is crushing him. Nothing could be finer in effect than Kean's silence here : 'the vocal silence of his eye,' when the great gloom of his approaching fate overshadows him, and he looks back at the sea of blood he has crossed to a crown. The visionary eye fixed on the 'signless inane,' the fingers playing convulsively and unconsciously with the hilt of his half lifted sword. There are terrible thoughts in that doomed heart at the moment. His spirit has gone forth to the last battle with the avenging destinies. But he yields not—the ghastly visions from Tartarus cannot affright him. After a few moments of this silent, wordless warfare he comes back

to the present, and the 'Good night, my lords,' shows him the calm and the unconquered once more.

When the curse of his mother falls on him, when the accusing queens arraign him by the souls he has murdered, with what haughty insolence he calls on the drums to beat that heaven may not hear these women 'rail on the Lord's anointed' ! In the sleeping scene the terrors of an awakened conscience are displayed with awful fidelity. The light, the terrible light of God shines in upon him at last, and reveals all the blackness of his soul. The long train of accusing spirits, bidding him 'despair and die,' at last shakes his mighty nature, and when he starts from his couch all the thrilling horrors of anticipated judgment flit across his pallid face like the wild drifting wrack of a stormy sky. We read them there and tremble. Awfully, shudderingly, gloomily did they seem to rise before the soul. This is the last hour in which pardon may yet reach him. The soul that is awakened may repent—all his several sins 'throng to the bar, crying guilty ! guilty !' His eternal fate hangs on this moment. But he fights his last fight with conscience. He extinguishes the light of God, and stifles the terrors of hell as he had before trod down all of humanity within him ; and exclaims, defiant to the last, 'Conscience is but a word that cowards use.' But though his spirit stands unbroken, his nerves falter ; and the startled 'Who's there ?' when he totters back weak and trembling against a pillar, is one of the finest and most subtle delineations of the separate workings of frame and spirit ever imagined.

Had the spirit faltered but for one instant, the tremendous unity in which lies all the significance of the character were lost ; but never is that iron will stronger, that soul more lofty than at the close of this scene, when, defying heaven as he had hitherto defied earth and Hades, he exclaims : 'Richard's himself again !' There was a terrific truth in Kean's acting throughout this terrible scene ; and in the rush and excitement that follow on the last great conflict, when crown and life are staked upon the die, no words are adequate to describe the emotions he excited. The whole audience thrilled, and trembled

with him, and were swayed as the mind of one man by the electric influence of his genius. Never was there more perfect sympathy established between author, actor and audience ; they seemed to form together one mighty human mind—one ‘over soul ;’ all individual feeling was absorbed in the common sympathetic emotion that made each feel with the aggregated intensity of all. In the glorious fire of his eyes—the sculptured beauty of his gestures—the powerful thrilling tones of his voice, there was a revelation of force, majesty and harmony that could not be surpassed. All hung suspended on his dying breath in the last conflict, none cared for the fate of Richmond, ‘shallow Richmond.’ Humanity had a more powerful representative, though the mighty spirit was only hovering on the extremest verge of life ; and when he falls, the breathless silence which pervaded the house proved the tension of excitement in which the audience were held. Then a storm of applause rent the air, the involuntary and well-deserved tribute of every human heart present to dramatic genius.





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